

## EDITORIALS &amp; OPINIONS

The Bulletin  
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## Knopp, Zika and Kropf pick priorities

State Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend, and state Reps. Jack Zika, R-Redmond, and Jason Kropf, D-Bend, just sent a clear signal about their priorities.

Knopp had \$4 million to spend. Zika and Kropf each had \$2 million to spend. It was money from the federal American Rescue Plan Act. Knopp told us they coordinated to try to get the most out of the \$8 million for the area.

Knopp put \$1 million toward a new well in Redmond to keep up with water demand. He put \$1 million toward early learning and child care at the Little Kits Early Learning and Childcare and Center at Oregon State University-Cascades. And he put \$2 million toward improving crossings across U.S. Highway 97 and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway in Bend, making travel safer for bicyclists, pedestrians, cars and trains.

Zika put \$1 million to Redmond's neighborhood revitalization program that includes sidewalks to make it easier and safer for people to get around. He put \$800,000 toward

NeighborImpact's efforts toward child care and for a food bank. And the remaining \$200,000 toward Redmond's REACH program and the Redmond Early Learning Center to expand child care.

As we have already reported, Kropf put his \$2 million toward Bend being able to acquire and renovate a low-barrier homeless shelter.

If you were to sum it all up, transportation safety, fighting homelessness, child care and water supply were all winners.

Knopp, Zika and Kropf were hired by voters to pick priorities and make such decisions about how to spend taxpayer dollars. Maybe you voted for them. Maybe you didn't. Maybe you don't like their positions on some issues or the party they are associated with. They did here, though, work together and in good faith on solving some of the region's problems. Here, they made good choices.

## Is Oregon ready for a cap on health care cost growth?

Ever thought the size of your medical bill should be a crime? In a way, that may be coming to Oregon.

The Oregon Legislature is set to pass a bill that would direct the Oregon Health Authority to set up civil penalties for health providers that fail to control costs or don't report their cost growth. It's one of Oregon's efforts to try to keep health care costs down.

House Bill 2081 doesn't establish the target rate of health care cost growth, though the plan is the state will do that. What the bill does is make it clear that providers have to come up with a plan for improvement if they miss the target and can't provide an adequate explanation. And if a provider doesn't meet the target for three out of five years or doesn't participate in the program, there will be a financial penalty.

The bill says the penalty should take into consideration the size of

the entity, the efforts it made, other penalties and its overall performance in reducing costs. The bill doesn't set the actual penalties. OHA will do that. The first penalties could not be imposed until Jan. 1, 2026. The bill seems almost certain to become law.

The Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems has stated bluntly that Oregon providers have been in a health care crisis and are not ready for it. "We must be clear — hospitals have not had the capacity to build the necessary infrastructure, partnerships, and data capabilities to operate under a cost growth target," it wrote in testimony about the bill.

Most Oregonians do want something to be done to hold down health care costs. Growth targets have had some success in other states. But the concern is always that quality and access may decline. And the other worry is that costs may shift, rather than truly go down.



## My Nickel's Worth

## Pass legislation to fund suicide hotline

May is Mental Health Month. By urging my public officials to prioritize suicide prevention, mental health, and crisis care, I am hoping to influence collective change to support #MentalHealth4All.

Right now, individuals in crisis are able to call 1-800-273-8255 to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. The lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress and those that care for them. Soon, it will be much easier to remember how to reach the lifeline as the number will be changing to "988" nationwide by July 2022.

Knowing this, it is critically important that states pass legislation NOW to reliably fund 988 and their state's crisis response system, just as we fund 911 and emergency services — through small fees on our phone bills. Reliable funding will help to ensure all 988 callers can reach a counselor in their own state who is familiar with and can connect them with local resources. Culturally competent support and local connections can better help all callers through their crisis and in their recovery.

Join me this month in urging your public officials to fund 988. We all play a role in changing the culture

around mental health. Together, we can ensure #MentalHealth4All.

—Richard Knotts, Bend

## Please get vaccinated

As COVID cases continue to spike we learn of the huge impact on our business community as they adjust to changes required while moving from one risk category to another. Yes, COVID impacts our business and entertainment options in a huge way. This is a serious concern for all of us. Living with this public health issue puts the need for vaccination front and center. Help our community get to work. If we listen to the public health professionals discuss the needs for the usual protocols to push back COVID infections we are also reminded of the need for vaccinations.

Recently Dr. Michael Baker, Jefferson County Public Health director, made a statement that is worth repeating. "If you aren't getting the vaccine out of health for yourself or the health of your loved ones," says Baker, "get the vaccine for your community, specifically the economic health of your community."

Dr. Baker, thank you for reminding us we can help our business and entertainment community open their doors to all of us. So, let's get vaccinated and help attack this virus that is

penetrating our lives.

In my view, getting vaccinated is the best way to help our community open up and thrive.

—Gloria Olson, Redmond

## Double talk from candidates

I was quite surprised to read (May 9) that Joyce Waring sees Maria Lopez-Dauenhauer as a school board candidate of "...unity and common sense..." after seeing weeks of that candidate's ads featuring strangely personal attacks on her opponent but no clear ideas for our schools.

I also don't understand how she and the other three candidates in her bloc (Imel, Henton, and Haffner) can advertise they are "Parents not Politicians" then spend time ignoring local audiences while appearing on political radio and TV. Henton did speak to the Sunriver Rotary but had no answer when asked for thoughts or views on school direction post-COVID.

Lopez-Dauenhauer claims she's not political but expects schools to teach our kids to love their country. I have high hopes the voters in our school district won't buy such insincere double-talk from candidates who have largely refused to even talk to local voters.

—Les Adams, Three Rivers

## Letters policy

Letters should be limited to one issue, contain no more than 250 words and include the writer's signature, phone number and address for verification. We edit letters for

brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject poetry, personal attacks, form letters, letters submitted elsewhere and those appropriate for other sections of The Bulletin. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

## How to submit

Please address your submission to either My Nickel's Worth or Guest Column and send it to The Bulletin. Email submissions are preferred. letters@bendbulletin.com

Editorials reflect the views of The Bulletin's editorial board, Publisher Heidi Wright, Editor Gerry O'Brien and Editorial Page Editor Richard Coe. They are written by Richard Coe.

## Talk of secession gets United States history all wrong

BY ALAN TAYLOR

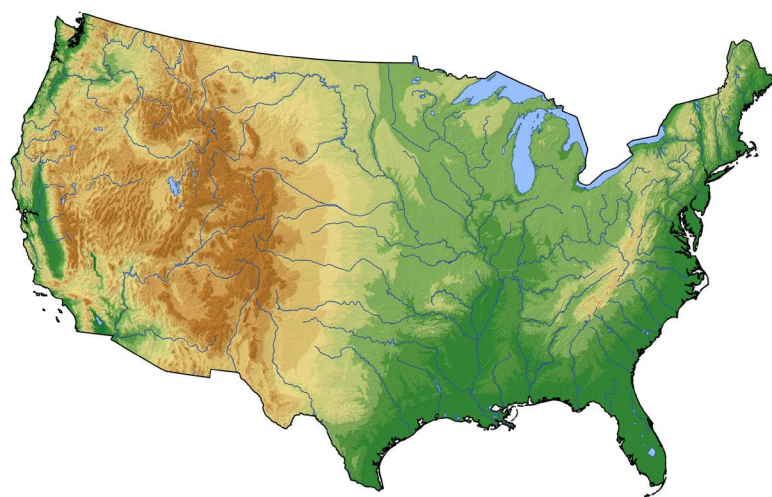
Special to The Washington Post

In our polarized times, talk of secession blooms on the losing side of bitterly contested national elections. After the 2016 election, some liberal Californians proposed a referendum to seek independence. Last December in Texas, a few leading Republicans actually threatened to secede from a nation whose courts would not overturn the 2020 presidential election. This talk of secession reflects animosities and fears, but it is also fundamentally based on a mythic and rosy version of our political origins — one that never was.

Modern secessionists claim that the Founders united to support an American creed that looks conveniently like their vision for America today. They blame their political opponents for betraying this political utopia.

In reality, however, the early American Republic was anything but a harmonious utopia. The Founders fiercely disagreed about how to govern the republic and they created a Union specifically designed to keep the peace between their diverse and fractious states. So powerful were animosities and fear of disunion and potential foreign meddling that might promote it that the United States set out on a path of expansion to push enemies away and relieve tensions domestically.

After winning independence, the United States began to unravel during the mid-1780s. The smaller states dreaded domination by larger ones. Frontier settlements threatened to



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break away from the east (and Vermont succeeded for a decade.) Connecticut men fought to take away the northern third of Pennsylvania; the rest of New England threatened a hostile takeover of Rhode Island. Alexander Hamilton denounced the states as "little, jealous, clashing, tumultuous commonwealths, the wretched nurseries of unceasing discord." Benjamin Franklin agreed, "Our States are on the point of separation, only to meet hereafter for the purpose of cutting one another's throats."

At the end of that decade, Hamilton and Franklin helped to draft and ratify a new federal constitution meant to form "a more perfect Union." Leading Americans understood this as a necessary step to keep the peace between the states and avert a future civil war. It also would help them

manage a cooperative effort to occupy the continent.

And yet, leaders like Patrick Henry and Sam Adams also feared that the new federal government might become too powerful and tyrannical. Having resisted Britain's centralizing might, many citizens balked at creating a consolidated nation. They supported a Union just strong enough to help the states but not powerful enough to subordinate them. While the pressures of the Revolutionary War had pulled the states together, a dread of central power kept pushing them apart.

Consequently, the Union became both cherished and feared by citizens. When informed of the new federal Constitution in 1787, South Carolina farmers staged a funeral for a coffin labeled "Liberty." They warned that

freedom could not endure if power passed "into the hands of men who live one thousand miles distant from you." Dread of a national elite, therefore, has deep roots in our politics.

Americans also feared that a foreign power would exploit these disaffected elements within the fragile Union. They understood that the country had dangerous fault lines within. Indigenous and enslaved people could ally with the British or Spanish empires to overthrow the United States. During the 1780s and 1790s, those empires armed Native peoples to resist the United States and provided safe havens for runaway enslaved people. Indeed foreigners could even exploit jealousies between the states to provoke disunion, as the British nearly did with the New England states during the War of 1812.

That fear drove American leaders to expand deep into the continent to push rival empires — British and Spanish — farther away from the United States. Leaders also distrusted their own settlers, fearing that they might break away to join another empire or form their own, independent republics, as Vermont and eastern Tennessee had done temporarily during the 1780s.

Perhaps nobody embodied these contradictions quite like Andrew Jackson. During the 1780s, he had covertly taken an oath of allegiance to Spain to trade enslaved people with that empire's colonists at Natchez. Thirty years later, he became a staunch American nationalist, who destroyed Indian resistance in Ala-

bama and seized Spanish-held Florida to eliminate a haven for runaway enslaved people. As president, he defied the Union in the nullification crisis with South Carolina, but then appeased the white Carolinians by permitting their suppression of abolitionist writings sent through the mail.

During the early 1840s, Jackson dreaded that the British meant to grab Texas, then an independent republic that had rebelled against Mexican rule. If the British succeeded, they would, Jackson predicted, rally "hordes of savages" and runaways to spread "servile war" throughout the South. By annexing Texas to the United States, Jackson thought the United States could perpetuate "our republican system, and . . . our glorious Union." He spoke for many Americans, who insisted that their freedom and Union demanded westward expansion, including the extension of slavery for others.

During the 19th century, most Americans tried to hold their Union together through territorial expansion, but instead they provoked a bloodbath. Unionists restored the nation through war and resumed adding territory — first Alaska, then Hawaii. But we have run out of places to acquire while the distrust between people of red and blue states has increased, creating new fault lines with ominous possibilities — unless we cherish a Union essential to our mutual safety.

■ Alan Taylor is author of "American Republics: A Continental History of the United States, 1783-1850"