

## EDITORIALS &amp; OPINIONS

The Bulletin  
AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPERHeidi Wright  
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Publisher  
Editor  
Editorial Page EditorOregon needs  
to fund worker  
training

Oregon doesn't need less money to train workers to get better jobs. It needs more.

Jobs don't solve all the state's problems. But not being able to find a good job or not being able to find a worker who has the skills to do a job creates problems of their own.

So why does Oregon give worker training short shrift?

Look at what happened to the money. General fund investment in worker training from the state has dropped. For the 2015-17 biennium, it was \$9 million. It's fallen since then by 10% or more. Coming out of a pandemic, do you think Oregon needs less money to help workers find jobs? It's set to be less.

Money is a tangible indicator. There are more subtle ones. You can't read too much into how Oregon's Joint Committee on Education has witnesses sign up to testify. But consider this, earlier this month Heather Ficht, the executive director of East Cascades Works, and Roger Lee, the CEO of Economic Development of Central Oregon, went to testify about the importance of funding for worker training. There were specific categories to sign up to speak for public universities, community colleges and financial assistance. Nothing for worker training. It was "other."

Ficht's nonprofit coordinates state and federal funding to help get training for workers and work with employers to try to match workers to their needs. It's located in Bend and serves 10 counties east of the Cascades.

There are plenty of people in the region who have a high school di-

ploma and can pass a drug test. They need a bit more training to get a good job. Employers can sometimes afford to provide that training on the job. Ficht's nonprofit can leverage state and federal dollars to provide some training or help subsidize on-the-job training.

That's a win for workers. It's a win for employers. It's a win for Oregon.

The outlook for worker training in Oregon is not all discouraging. House Bill 2820 would create a pilot program for 1,000 low-income job seekers who live in areas of poverty. There would be career coaching, occupational training and job placement services. That could turn around people's lives. It's a pilot program. If it doesn't have good results, the state could bring it to a halt. Isn't that the kind of program Oregon should be considering now that the state budget is bulging with billions more? But the bill is just sitting in committee.

Another encouraging prospect for worker training is money from the American Rescue Plan Act. The state, counties and cities are all deciding how to allocate their money. For instance, Bend city councilors have discussed using some of the city's money to go toward worker training. In initial discussions, councilors seemed much more likely to focus on housing rather than workforce training. We understand that. Empowering workers to get training and get better jobs does mean, though, that they will be more likely to afford housing.

Historical editorial:  
Keep the water pure

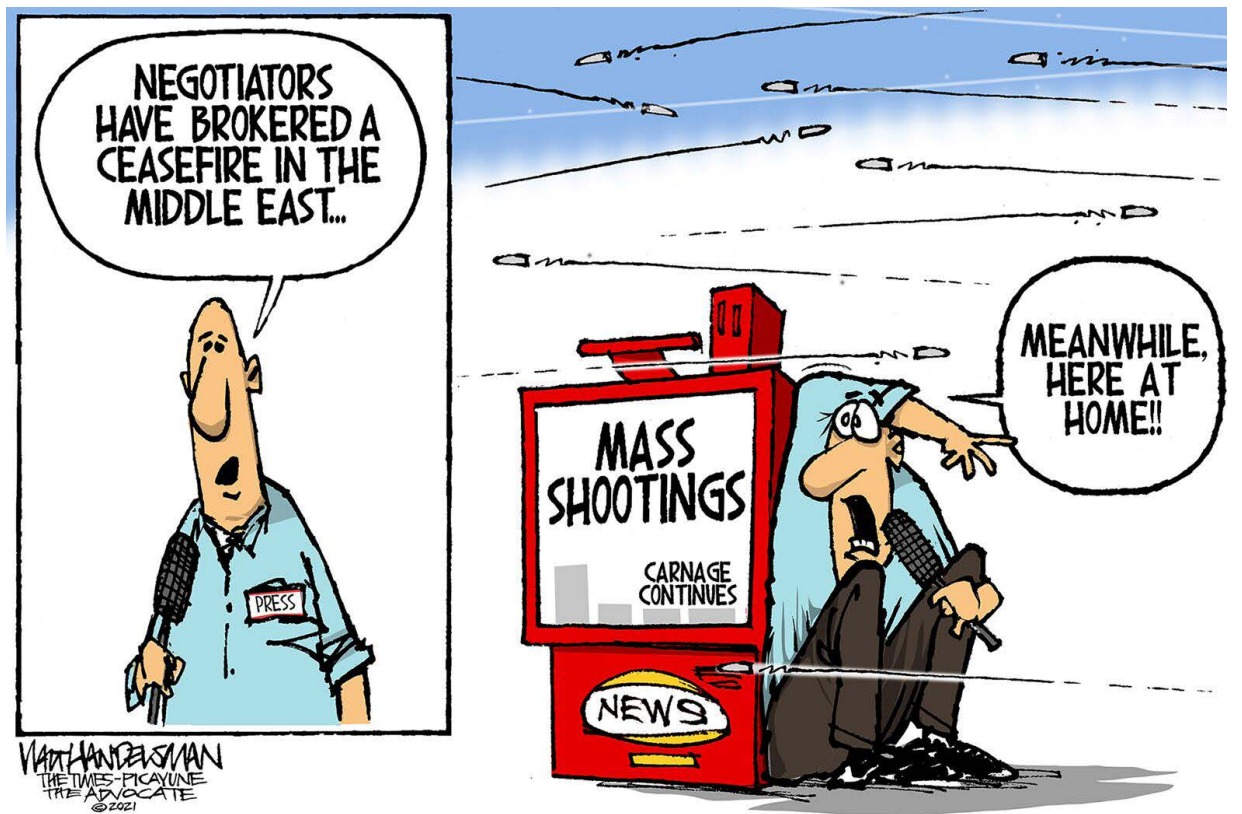
Editor's note: The following historical editorial originally appeared in what was then called *The Bend Bulletin* on June 29, 1906.

Dr. U. C. Coe's timely article elsewhere in this issue, in which he ably urges the importance of a pure water supply, should receive careful consideration of all settlers in the Deschutes valley. While this fertile valley is remarkably free from disease and is blessed with a healthful, invigorating climate and an excellent water supply, yet there are a few simple rules that all should observe that the danger of disease may be reduced to the lowest possible minimum. As the doctor states, there are few sources so prolific with disease as drinking water

that is in any way contaminated. While water drawn directly from the river contains but a small percent of impure matter, yet at certain times of the year, especially during hot weather, there is a slight danger from river water. This danger is much greater when ditch water is used and settlers who are dependent on drinking water on this source should read carefully the doctor's statements and profit thereby.

His suggestion regarding the need of some permanent organization to keep uncontaminated the water of the river, touches a matter of great importance to the health of those living in the region. Some action should at once be taken that will lead to permanent results.

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.



## Remote work will not kill big cities

BY PETE SAUNDERS

With COVID-19 cases trending downward across the U.S., it's getting easier to say the worst of the pandemic is behind us. Meanwhile, predictions that the pandemic will change our way of living forever are getting louder.

Not surprisingly, many prognosticators see big cities such as New York and San Francisco declining, as urbanites tired of being cooped up in their tiny apartments decamp for the space and greenery of the suburbs or small towns. Others insist metropolises are poised to bounce back after a temporary exodus of workers.

I find the optimists more convincing. There will be — there are already — short-term impacts to urban growth. But the pandemic is unlikely to lead to a new and permanent advantage favoring suburbia, or the single-family home, or small or mid-sized cities.

History bears this out. The 1918 "Spanish Flu" infected more than 500 million people, about a third of the world's population at the time. Somewhere between 17 million and 50 million people died from the virus globally. In the U.S. alone, roughly 30 million of the nation's 105 million people were infected, and somewhere between 500,000 and 800,000 of them died.

Yet, despite such widespread devastation, the pandemic had little long-term impact on how people lived in the U.S. It did not trigger a widespread shift in lifestyle or land use. Cities continued to boom because that's where jobs were created.

While many of those who had the means did move to railroad or street-car suburbs on the urban periphery,

cities continued to grow rapidly for another 30 years, through the Depression and Second World War. Suburbs began their explosive growth only after federal policies such as the U.S. Housing Acts of 1934 and 1949, the G.I. Bill and the Interstate Highway Act subsidized suburban development at the expense of urban redevelopment. Later, the three "As" — air conditioning, affordability and anti-union sentiment — drove growth in the Sun Belt.

During this pandemic, too, many relatively wealthy citydwellers sought safe haven outside of cities. In May 2020, the *New York Times* published a graphic showing where New Yorkers who fled the city during its initial outbreak eventually landed. Most headed to second homes in the Hamptons or southern Florida.

If they haven't already, though, most of them are likely to return when their offices reopen. The same goes for less affluent residents who left New York for their hometowns, often to live with parents.

As for longer-term trends, single-family homes were growing in popularity even before the pandemic. It's unclear whether rising house prices have more to do with families looking for space or with changing demographics, as millennials approach middle age and their child-raising years.

The big question mark is remote work. In theory, if people can work from anywhere, they can choose to live anywhere, leaving congested and overpriced cities behind.

I'd argue, however, that even those who have left big cities for smaller and cheaper ones will soon return or be replaced. If there's anything we've learned over the last 30 years of urban rebound, it's that cities have one huge advantage over suburbs and small towns:

the experiences they can offer.

Pandemic or not, humans are social creatures. There was a time when cities tried to compete with suburbs by imitating them. They used federal urban renewal funding in the 1960s and 1970s to dismantle urban neighborhoods and build malls and pedestrian shopping areas.

The strategy rarely worked. The homogeneity and stultifying conformity of postwar suburbia weren't any more appealing within city limits than they were outside them.

Modern cities really began to prosper when they doubled down on what made them different from suburbs. They developed and maximized the wealth of commercial, social and cultural amenities they offered. Entertainment, arts and cultural institutions, bars and restaurants, beautifully maintained parks — cities simply have more of these than smaller or less dense places, all located within a stimulating, mixed-use environment.

If anything, this desire for experiences is only set to grow after more than a year of self-enforced isolation. Even a new era of working from home could benefit cities. While some downtown office towers may empty out, they could be remade into more livable spaces — mixed-use structures with apartments as well as shops, restaurants and offices.

That kind of adaptation could bring more people into even closer proximity to the amenities and experiences they want, while adding to the housing stock in ways that make big U.S. cities much more affordable. Rather than victims of the pandemic, cities might just be among its biggest beneficiaries.

Pete Saunders is the community and economic development director for the village of Richton Park, Illinois, and an urban planning consultant.

## Letters policy

We welcome your letters. 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.

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## How would things change if COVID-19 killed more children?

BY KATE COHEN

The Washington Post

What if COVID-19 had killed more children?

That's what I was thinking when my husband and I accompanied our 15-year-old to get her first dose of the vaccine.

The last of our three children was finally getting vaccinated, but the moment felt more ceremonial than emotional. She would be freed from restrictions and anxiety, not from a great mortal threat.

My daughter had been strict about the rules, but more to avoid spreading COVID-19 than to avoid getting sick from it. Given the data, she was right. U.S. children have accounted for only 1% to 3% of reported COVID-19 hospitalizations and 0% to 0.2% of COVID-19 deaths. COVID-19 has so far killed 355 Americans 18 and younger, compared with more than 450,000

people 65 and older. Even if my daughter had gotten COVID-19, the chance that it would have killed her was somewhere between none and infinitesimal.

What would it have felt like if instead we had spent a year fearing for her life?

Intellectually, I reject the idea that children are more precious than adults. Politically, I object to the use of children as rhetorical tools. But emotionally? If I had thought my kids were at substantial and lethal risk from COVID-19, I would have spent the past year terrified. Not bored, confused and vaguely anxious — terrified.

Even the fear I felt for my own parents' safety wasn't the gut-twisting terror I would have felt at the prospect of my children's death. Sorry, folks!

But it's true, and they know it, because they were children in the polio era.

My parents were 7 in 1952, when the polio epidemic reached its peak, infecting nearly 58,000 Americans, including one of my father's sisters. She was 4 years old. She was bedridden for a year, then went on to a wheelchair, then crutches, then a lifetime of moderate disability.

Pre-vaccine polio wasn't usually fatal; it killed fewer than 2,000 Americans a year. But polio targeted children, so much so that it's known as "infantile paralysis."

In Montgomery, Alabama, where my father grew up, the news reported the polio case counts and deaths. It listed canceled camps and Sunday schools; it noted diminished attendance at sporting events. It also featured copious ads for polio insurance and one that even pitched a new television set as a weapon against disease: "FIGHT POLIO. Keep Your Children at home and entertained."

The mix of dark facts and light fea-

tures, plus the unseemly flourishing of pandemic capitalism — it was just like now in many ways.

But one story feels very different. In late June 1953, Montgomery County undertook a mass inoculation campaign — not with the Salk vaccine, which was still two years from general use, but with gamma globulin, a substance made from blood plasma that was thought to confer some temporary protection against polio.

In four days, 800 volunteers inoculated 32,948 children. Dr. Daniel G. Gill, the state health officer of Alabama, later wrote, "We believe that the coverage approached 100 percent."

With almost no notice, every single child under 10 was taken to the correct place on the correct day for a treatment that, as the Montgomery Advertiser explained in a front-page Q&A, didn't always work but "may provide some protection against paralysis."

Question 5: "Is GG a cure for polio?" Answer: "No." And still, 100% participation.

So far that year, just 81 Montgomery County residents had contracted polio, and three children had died. And still, 100% participation.

Today — with more than 575,000 Americans dead — there are vaccine resisters and anti-maskers and politicians who egg them on. That's already incredible. But if COVID-19 victims were mostly children? It would be inconceivable.

That vaccine hesitancy will kill people. Not masking up has killed people. I don't wish I had spent a year in fear for my children's lives, but I do see that our relative lack of concern for older people helps fuel this epidemic.

In other words, if more children had gotten sick, fewer Americans would have died.

Kate Cohen, a Washington Post contributing columnist, is a writer from Albany, New York.