

McPherson Douglass was cleared, but her post was wrong

The investigator's conclusion was straightforward. Carrie McPherson Douglass, Bend-La Pine School Board member, was not found to have done anything wrong.

She did not violate school board policy, legal standards for campaign speech or the district's harassment policy when she posted personal information about her opponent, Maria Lopez-Dauenhauer, on Facebook during the May campaign for school board.

That doesn't mean what McPherson Douglass did was right.

On April 15 McPherson Douglass posted on her personal Facebook page fairly typical political campaign charges — that her opponent is “uber wealthy” lives in a \$4.2 million house, spent most of her life in California, is a single-issue candidate who is committed to fully reopening schools “at all costs” and has “far-right views.” Then she did something out of the ordinary: She posted Lopez-Dauenhauer's address, a map showing where the home is, and a family picture, including Lopez-Dauenhauer's children.

“I do not want any negative comments about her here or anywhere else,” she did add. “She is a mother and a Central Oregon community member and I want all candidates treated with respect.”

Lopez-Dauenhauer filed a complaint with the school board, saying McPherson Douglass was doxing, or revealing personal information about her to hurt her.

We aren't going to go into detail of the legal analysis by the investigator, a lawyer hired by the High Desert Education Service District. Briefly, Oregon did not have a doxing law when these actions took

place. School district policy has no specific policies applicable to board member's conduct when they are campaigning. And laws regarding political speech give people a lot of freedom to express themselves.

There's no question that Lopez-Dauenhauer's address was publicly available before McPherson Douglass posted it on Facebook. It's in the form candidates must fill out when running for office, among other places. But was it necessary for McPherson Douglass to make it easier for people to find it, to publicize it? Note that McPherson Douglass got security and a private address for her own home to protect her own family.

Images of Lopez-Dauenhauer's children were also part of Lopez-Dauenhauer's campaign. Still, should McPherson Douglass have used images of her opponent's family as part of an effort to campaign against her opponent? Using a picture of Lopez-Dauenhauer would be one thing. Using an image that included her children is another.

The most telling thing is that McPherson Douglass apologized for the post. She wrote she regretted it from the moment she hit publish. She took the post down. She deserves credit for recognizing that. And while we are certain she will continue to be an excellent school board member, the post was wrong.

If you want to read the investigator's report and conclusions, we had to make a public records request to get it. Email us at rcoe@bendbulletin.com, and we will send you a copy.

Nearman doesn't deserve to be back in Legislature

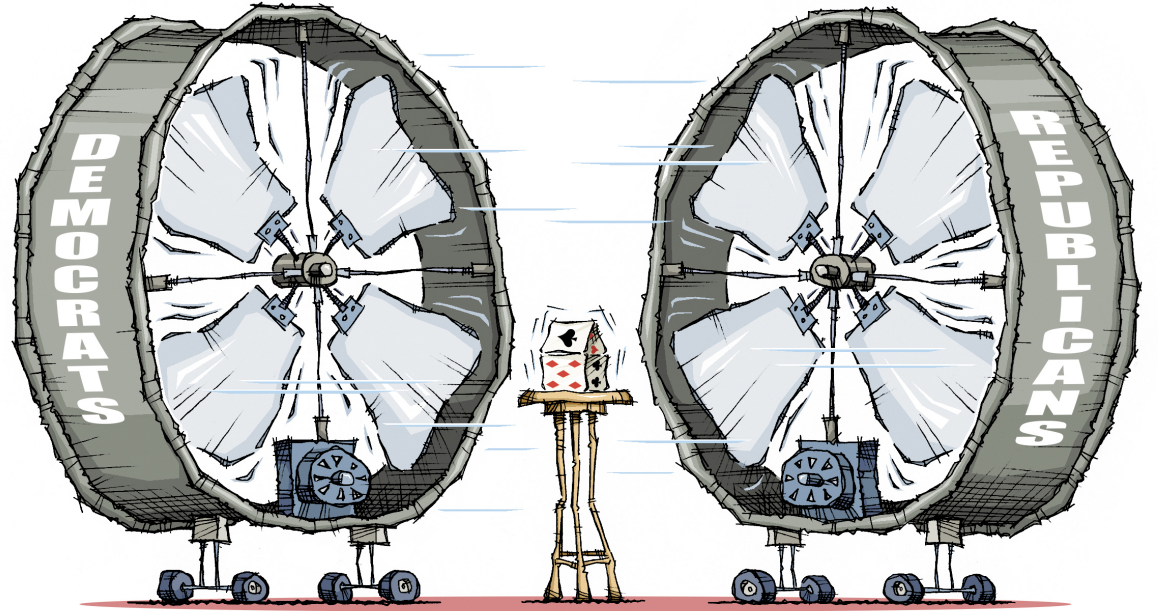
He didn't get the message. Former state Rep. Mike Nearman apparently wants to replace himself in the Oregon Legislature after he became the first legislator ever expelled from the Oregon Legislature.

Nearman helped plan and then led demonstrators into the locked Capitol during a special session on Dec. 21. His Republican colleagues called on him to resign. Nearman refused. Every legislator voted to expel him except one, Nearman.

Even in the moments before the

vote to expel him, Nearman tried to warp the narrative, insisting he was being expelled because he believes the public should be let into their Capitol. He was not expelled because of his beliefs. He was expelled because his actions allowed demonstrators — some armed — into the Capitol.

We can't imagine he would be reappointed to the same seat. A freshly introduced House Bill 3413 would make it clear that an expelled legislator could not be reappointed to the Legislature. Worth passing.



INFRASTRUCTURE
NEGOTIATIONS

GUEST COLUMN

Critical thinking and theory are needed now

BY WILLIAM BARRON

Today, more than ever we need to practice critical thinking and the principles of critical theory. We are bombarded by partisan media, politics and opinions. We face both sides of the 'Big Lie,' 'Stop the Steal,' and unabashedly biased 'journalism' and editorials. Without a structured, normalized, approach toward analysis, we are destined to wallow in unverified, unchallenged fantasies which can then become the structure of our society, institutions, and legal systems.

Critical thinking and theory do not profess any bias toward outcome, rather they focus us on a questioning process and let the outcome evolve and crystallize more with ever probing questions. We must never just accept, but rather presume something is wrong, something can be improved, and/or be more holistically truthful. Process and practices which encourage us to make explicit self-examination, and which are more concerned with preventing the loss of truth rather than being afraid of the resulting outcome are good for individuals, institutions and societies in general. Critical thinking and theory typically has three aspects: 1) presume something is wrong and identify what, 2) identify the aspects, or actors, which can be and/or need to be changed, and 3) establish norms

for routine criticism and analysis. The only way to determine if our institutional knowledge are institutional myths is to critically challenge, probe and analyze every aspect, on a continuous basis. If it proves false, then let facts prevail. If it withstands the scrutiny, either the challenge needs to be changed or the facts are firm. Therefore, critical thinking and theory are the antithesis of cancel culture.

As to critical race theory, let's agree: racism isn't biological. We are not born racists. It is learned. Therefore, racism must be a normal feature of our social fabric, woven into our education, public policy and legal structure. If so, then our responsibility as a society, as members of a civil order, is to critically ask ourselves, what needs to be changed in those institutions, and legal framework to eradicate systematic racism. Consider how much fuller and richer our accepted history would be if it were written including all perspectives including those of race, religion and gender. Imagine how our legal system could be improved, presuming institutional racism could be recognized and removed.

If you are not willing to accept the pretext of institutional racism, ask yourself why it took over a hundred years after the end of the Civil War for the Civil Rights Act to be passed and the Supreme Court to recognize the

legitimacy of mixed marriages? Ask yourself why the Civil Rights Act was even necessary? Why were Jim Crow laws passed and brutally enforced? And why, even today, are voter suppression laws being proposed and passed by state legislators?

Those amongst us who refuse to challenge the social norms and status quo will forever be the pawns of those who want to manipulate the uninformed with disinformation, biased partisan partial perspectives, and conspiracy theories. Ironically, those claiming cancel culture are the ones who have tried for centuries to cancel and ignore the historical perspectives of others. All of us, to some degree, are racist and sexist; our social culture made us what we are. Maybe we should be engaging in critical gender and critical religion theory as well.

And who am I? I'm an engineer, trained to question everything, challenge the status quo and continually search for a better way to make things, systems and processes work. Trained never to accept anything at face value regardless of who propagated the thought or policy. The one who practiced the art of critical thinking and theory as an engineer and executive in the private and public sectors to advance engineering, as well as corporate and public policy.

#NeverFeartheDream
■ William Barron lives in Bend.

Letters policy

Letters should be limited to one issue, contain no more than 250 words and include the writer's 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.

Guest columns

Your submissions should be between 550 and 650 words and must include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject those submitted elsewhere. Locally submitted columns alternate with national columnists and commentaries. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days. Email: 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.

Return-to-Office: A new competitive “strategically hybrid” model

BY NITIN NOHRIA
Bloomberg

How many days each week is your company asking you to be back in the office?

That's become a polarizing question — and the answer is seen as a marker of whether the company or employees come first.

Apple, for instance, says it wants workers in the office on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays starting in September — a plan that sparked an employee backlash. Citigroup has also asked employees to be in the office three days a week. Some companies, including Goldman Sachs Group and JP Morgan Chase & Co., hope to revert to an everyone-on-site model. Bank of America Corp. wants all vaccinated employees in the office in early September — it will figure out what to do with the unvaccinated later. Ford Motor Co., Salesforce.com and Twitter say they will extend work-from-home privileges indefinitely.

While plans still vary widely, most firms are contemplating a hybrid arrangement like Apple's — a set schedule of companywide remote days and office days.

But one-size-fits-all policies covering

every employee are a mistake. Leaders deciding how to organize work should make more nuanced choices that reflect the needs of both employees and company. It's more complex than simply picking one scheme for the whole firm, yet the payoff for that complexity will be worth it.

Think of this model as “strategically hybrid” — a schedule that reflects the specific ways individuals and teams interact to create value. Optimizing a company in this manner can help sharpen its competitive position. It can increase productivity and speed in some areas, while doubling down on creativity, collaboration and the full human experience in others. Taken together, these choices — precisely because of their difficulty — will be hard to replicate and can form the foundations of a durable advantage.

The following questions should drive these choices:

- Where do we want to prioritize efficiency, speed and coordination — recognizing that the answer often points toward remote work?
- Where do we want to prioritize creativity, complex problem solving and spontaneity — which are more likely to happen in person?

- For culture-building activities, what is the right mix of in-person and virtual interactions?

- If employees in different jobs or roles have their own preferred location for work, how much flexibility will we provide? And are we prepared to lose people if we can't accommodate their preferences?

To illustrate what I mean by being strategically hybrid, consider the return-to-work choices of two hypothetical firms.

Trendy Store and ClassicClothes.com are retailers. Each sells casual clothing primarily to young women. Trendy Store's competitive strategy is to be store-centric and fashion-forward. ClassicClothes.com's strategy is to sell a curated collection of established brands online.

The different strategies driving the firms' return-to-work plans can be seen department by department.

- Finance. Trendy Store's finance division performs routine activities and its productivity rose while working remotely. Post COVID-19, these employees will continue remotely, coming to the office two days a month for business reviews. Because ClassicClothes.com adjusts prices on its website dy-

namically, its finance group consults hour-by-hour with the merchandising department to make pricing decisions. This team will return to the office to make that cooperation easier.

- Procurement. Trendy Store's large group of fashion-forward designers will return to the office every day to collaborate on the tactile, three-dimensional work of designing clothing — a process that can't be replicated adequately online. Because ClassicClothes.com sources its goods from established brands, its merchandisers can continue to work remotely.

- Sales/Customer Service. Trendy Store needs it sales staff to come to the store to serve customers in-person. ClassicClothes.com, whose customers order online, will allow its customer-service team to continue working remotely.

Note that across every department and function, each company's choices are guided by its overall corporate strategy. In some cases, these choices may become even more fine-grained. Writing in Harvard Business Review, Lynda Gratton argues that managers should make return-to-work decisions not only by function or department, but also on a person-by-person ba-

sis, factoring in variables such as the length of an employee's commute, the availability of space for a home office, the strength of the employee's existing network within the company and his or her tenure with the firm.

There are significant potential downsides to the strategic hybrid approach. Building a strong, cohesive corporate culture will be harder in such a workplace. Organizations must ensure that their diversity and inclusion goals are not inadvertently set back in this process. Allowing some people to continue working from home and requiring others to return to the office risks fostering jealousy, resentment and complaints about fairness. The strategic reasons for those decisions must be communicated clearly and firmly.

Becoming strategically hybrid requires recognizing the kinds of in-person collaboration that create value while balancing the concerns of stakeholders to enhance the company's competitive advantage. Ultimately, success is a key part of job satisfaction, and making intelligent trade-offs is the essence of leadership.

■ Nitin Nohria is a professor and former dean of Harvard Business School.