

# In search for compromise, Gov. Brown must lead

Gov. Kate Brown faces a legacy-defining choice as the 2017 Legislature enters its final weeks: Will she put the good of Oregon ahead of her quest for re-election next year?

The answer matters deeply for Oregonians. For this year's legislative session to succeed, Brown must stand up to public-employee unions and their allies.

The unions and some Democrats on the left seem so insistent on getting their own way that they would rather sink the ship of state than accommodate reasonable, meaningful compromise. The difficulty for Brown is that she counts on their money and grass-roots activism for her 2018 election campaign, to which she already is devoting considerable time.

At stake in 2017 are statewide transportation improvements, taxes, and cost savings in the Public Employees Retirement System and other areas.

As Scappoose Sen. Betsy Johnson, a moderate Democrat, and other veteran legislators have noted, this year's big issues appear far more intertwined than in the past.

That makes it easier for any interest group or partisan bloc to thwart progress everywhere if they don't get their way in one area.

The latest example is the Service Employees International Union's threat to overturn the Legislature's transportation-infrastructure package, which has been a priority for Democrats and Republicans alike, unless legislators pass a suitable tax package to help schools and human services.

This is last fall's ballot fight being replayed. In the aftermath of its decisive but divisive defeat of Ballot Measure 97, the business community has been unable to coalesce and work with unions on an alternative. As a result, SEIU, the Oregon Education Association and

their allies are continuing their push to dramatically increase business taxes.

The SEIU contends that Oregon should increase revenue for schools and human services before raising taxes and fees for transportation projects. That is a rational viewpoint. But it would be irrational to fight the transportation package at the ballot box — as the SEIU said it might do — if its preferred revenue plan fails in the Legislature.

The Democratic majority in the Legislature needs Republican votes to pass any tax package.

Republicans want meaningful cost savings, including PERS reforms beyond the meager proposal unveiled last week.

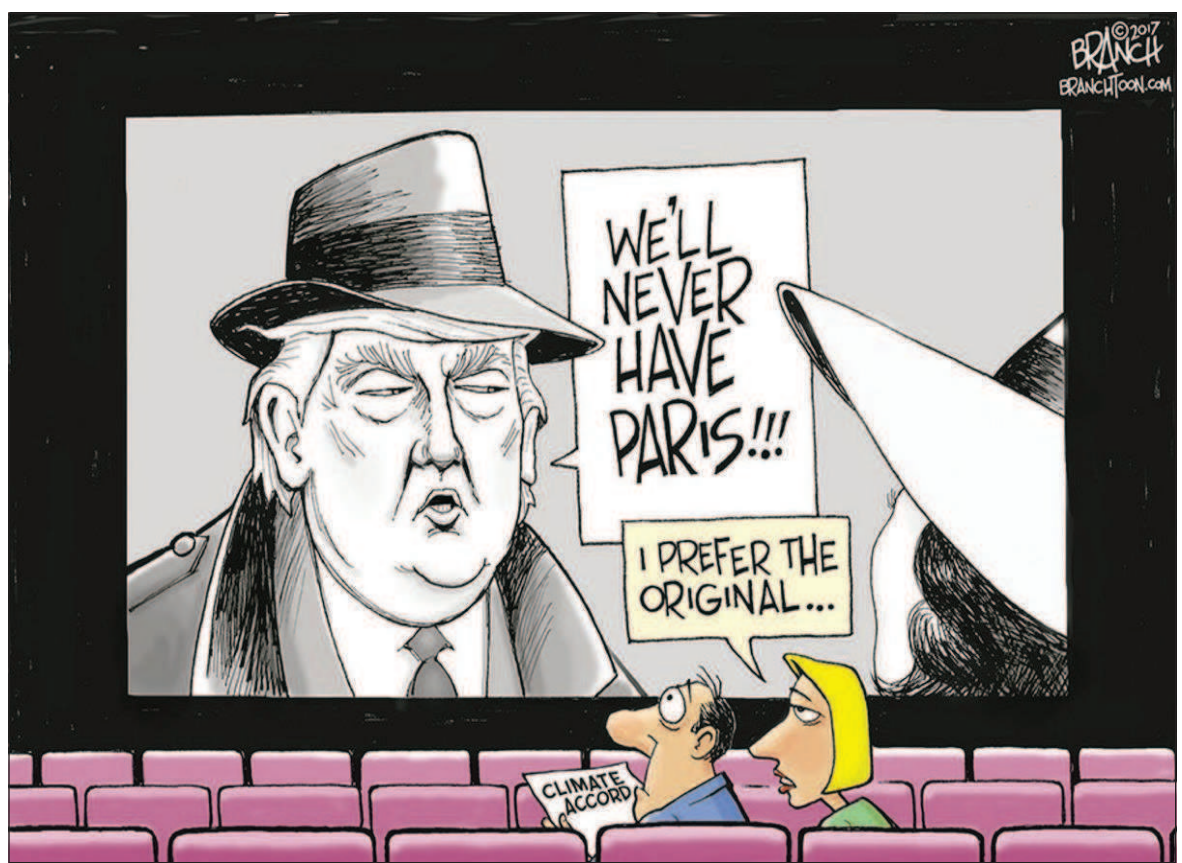
Republicans, especially in the Senate, are steadfast against the unions' preferred gross receipts tax — a commercial activity tax — to replace Oregon's existing corporate income tax. That plan would create such winners and losers that some companies could see their tax bills triple.

Centrist legislators are floating an alternative that deserves consideration: Temporarily raise corporate and personal income taxes to deal with the state's budget hole.

That is not a long-term solution to Oregon's unstable, unpredictable tax system. But neither is it a wrong-way trip into the unintended tax consequences of a new business tax that, even if it is doable, needs far more work.

Brown endorsed the transportation package this week. That is a welcome step but by itself an inadequate one. Oregonians need her to campaign not for re-election but for a worthwhile transportation package, meaningful PERS reforms and pragmatic tax decisions.

Success will require passion, persuasiveness and willingness to defy her past allies.



FARMER'S FATE

# My bonbon life

By Brianna Walker  
To the Blue Mountain Eagle



Brianna Walker

"Boy, what a life you have!" the woman remarked.

I put the cap back on the syringe, and stuck it into the pocket on my coveralls. "Yep," I replied, "I wouldn't trade it for anything."

The woman nodded her head, "I mean, really, you are lucky, because you have more time than most people do."

"More time?" I suddenly realized where she was going with this. "I thought we all had the same allotted 24 hours?"

"Oh you know what I mean," she said.

I raised an eyebrow. "Well, you don't have to go to work," she said exasperatedly, "which gives you time that most people don't have. Time that allows you to do crafts and projects or just whatever you want to do. Most people don't have that, you know."

I smiled a fake smile, "Well, speaking of time, I need to get back to vaccinating these sheep."

"Yeah, I need to get some stuff taken care of too," she smiled. "After all, some of us have to work for a living!"

It was a beautiful day to work the animals. I kicked the mud off my Muck boots as I climbed back over the rickety fence. I really should fix that thing, I mumbled to myself. Good thing I have all the time in the world to do it.

So in all my free time — in be-

tween watching soaps and eating bonbons — I decided to write up a bonbon recipe for all the women in agriculture that "are really lucky" because they have "more time than most people do."

### My bonbon recipe

- Start with coffee. This is an important first step.

- Mix in something for breakfast. You can substitute coffee for this step if you choose.

- Brush your teeth. You can use coffee for this step as well. This is known as multi-tasking.

- The fuel filter on the tractor is back ordered, and the battery on the ATV is dead, so you pack hay to the animals by hand.

- Read the "to do" list you made last night and start on the first one.

- Before you complete the first item on your list, answer the phone to discover another tractor has broken down and the closest part is three hours away.

- Drink another cup of coffee. It's going to be a long day. (Good thing farmers have more time than most people).

- Load up the kids. Bring their schoolwork along — may as well get their reading done on the drive.

- Six hours later, part in hand, it's time to find some food for lunch.

- Gourmet, home-cooked, all

natural sounds great, but everyone's stomachs are growling, and the "to do" list hasn't even been started on. So gourmet soup out of a can works. And coffee.

- Finally ready to climb in the tractor, where you will disc and play flash cards with the kids — at least until it's too dark in the cab to see what 9x3 is.

- Upon arriving home, feed the animals, feed the kids, restart the washing machine (maybe if you're lucky you'll get it in the dryer this time).

- Make another "to do" list for tomorrow. Basically, just add a few more things to your existing list — as you never even checked off the first item. If you can, set your coffee pot for the next morning. A rancher friend once told me the reason she drinks so much coffee is because she's too poor to buy alcohol.

- Sit down to pay bills and hear a loud commotion outside. There are sheep prancing on porch, which awakened the cats, which awakened the rooster, which awakened the hound — insert phone call — which has now awakened the neighbors.

- Drink coffee, sleep when you can, repeat every day. Slight variations may occur in different elevations, seasons or the type of agriculture you find yourself in.

The woman was right about one thing, though. I wouldn't know what to do with a 40 hour work week.

Forget 9-5. Farmers and ranchers prefer 5-life.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Access to public lands

**To the Editor:**  
"Access," as defined by Webster, is: approach, admittance, admission or accessibility. The issue of access keeps raising its head. Access to our public lands by existing roads and trails. Public lands, not Forest Service lands or BLM lands. These

agencies have no lands. They are public servants hired to care for public lands consistent with local county land use plans and policies. The Federal Land Management and Policy Act, section 202(c)(9), requires this.

Let's hear the conclusion of this matter. Grant County Ordinance 2013-01 states: all roads, trails, stock driveways and byways across

public lands in Grant County...shall remain open...unless otherwise authorized for closure by the Grant County Court and the Grant County sheriff. I ask the Grant County Court to see that these public employees adhere to their own creed of "caring for the land and serving the people."

Michael R. Christensen  
John Day

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