

Special session about politics, not policy

Gov. Kate Brown is trying to have it both ways. She's taking a tax break from Oregon businesses and she's calling a special legislative session to give businesses a tax break.

If that sounds like election-year posturing by a governor who is seeking re-election, well, it is.

Brown riled Republicans and business leaders this month by announcing she would sign Senate Bill 1528, passed a few weeks ago by the Oregon Legislature. The bill is a reaction to congressional passage late last year of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

The federal law gave a tax cut to "pass-through" entities — businesses whose profits or losses are passed directly to the owners and counted as personal income for taxation purposes. Such businesses generally are organized as sole proprietorships, LLCs, partnerships or S-corporations.

The state legislation, SB 1528, stops that tax break from also applying to Oregon income taxes. As Brown explained, such businesses still will get their federal tax cut but not the same cut in their state income taxes. Thus, the state will collect more tax revenue.

Brown said that's not a tax increase, just a lack of tax cut.

Opponents disagree. One of them, state Sen. Brian Boquist, R-Dallas, confirmed this week that he will sue the state over SB 1528.

Boquist contends the bill raises taxes and thus needed a supermajority for passage in the Legislature. Instead, Democrats in the Senate and House passed it by simple majorities. Four Democrats joined all Republicans in voting no.

Meanwhile, Brown now wants the Legislature to hold a special session to give sole proprietorships a tax break.

If this sounds confusing and purely political, well, again it is.

During a special legislative session in 2013, Democrats gained Republican support for the so-called "Grand Bargain" by including a break for LLCs, partnerships and S-corporations.

Sole proprietorships were left out of that deal, and Brown now says that was unfair to them.

The 2019 Legislature could make that change, even retroactively for this year. But Brown claims small businesses need more certainty than that, and said she would order lawmakers to hold a special session before June 30 and ask them to broaden the 2013 small-business tax break to include sole proprietors.

Meanwhile, many of her fellow Democrats, particularly in the state House, have been trying to undo the overall 2013 tax break. And last week, Brown would not commit to whether the 2013 tax break was good long-term public policy. Neither was she ready to discuss tax reform, which she previously said would be a critical issue for the 2019 Legislature.

Boquist is right. Holding a special legislative session is about politics, not good government policy.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hamsher for county judge

To the Editor:

I remember when I first came here, in 1989, there was hardly a residence for sale. The local economy was strong. Sawmills were running multiple shifts. There were no empty storefronts, and there were twice as many gas stations as we have now.

Over the next 20 years I watched our population decline and our economy erode. The thought crossed my mind, many times, that I could move away to a more populated area, and make at least twice the money I make here. But it's such a trade-off! I love Grant County. This is my home. I love the people here. I love the land. I love the richness of life our corner of the world has to offer.

Eventually I became interested in local government, and have been a member of the city council here in Prairie City for about seven years. I have served on the city council under three different mayors, the most recent being our current mayor, Jim Hamsher, which brings us to the point of this letter.

Prior to Jim Hamsher's mayorship, Prairie City's city council was pretty much in a state of dysfunctionality. Lots of bickering and dissent. Not much cohesiveness. Things were looking bleak. Well, to make a long story short, it takes good, strong leadership to create positive results, and that's what Jim has provided — good strong leadership. Our council meetings, under his direction, are properly run. Efficient and functional.

I attribute his leadership skills, directly, to the renewed effectiveness and functionality of our city council.

I believe that if we elect Jim Hamsher as our new county judge we will see these same results in our county court. I believe that effectiveness will be restored to our county court, as well as a positive change in the general demeanor of the court toward the wishes and will of our citizenry.

As stated earlier, it takes good, strong leadership to get positive results. I believe that Jim Hamsher is the best choice for county judge.

I invite you all to join me in voting for Jim Hamsher as County Judge.

Les Church
Prairie City

Madden venue can't stay open without local participation

To the Editor:

Living in this community, we all see what is happening to our local economy. Businesses are closing down, people are moving away and our community is slowly fading away. I would like to ask anyone who enjoys having live music here in our county to show up to the Madden Brothers Performing Arts Center Friday, April 20, for the concert. The last concert had very little turnout, and the venue will not be able to stay open without local participation. The Madden family has invested so much time and money into this venue in an effort to better our community and give people something fun to do around here. The least we can do is show up and enjoy ourselves! Please come support local business.

Joe Rigney
Mt. Vernon

Second Amendment rights in jeopardy

To the Editor:

Our Second Amendment rights are in serious jeopardy! Two 2018 Oregon state initiatives, 43 and 44, would drastically diminish our gun ownership rights.

Initiative 43 will require the registration, surrender or destruction of firearms meeting a broad range of criteria. Failure to comply with the regulations created by this initiative will be prosecutable as a Class B

felony. Many of you own firearms meeting the criteria outlined by this initiative.

Initiative 44 will require that all firearms be equipped with trigger-locks or stored in tamper-proof safes. This initiative will render your firearms practically useless in the case of self-defense, where response time is critical. Imagine having to take the time to remove a trigger-lock, or rush to your gun safe when an intruder is in your home!

The laws created by these initiatives will only affect law-abiding citizens. And given the high concentration of liberals on Oregon's west side, there's a high likelihood that both initiatives will pass.

The good news is that we have recourse, at the county level. Four Oregon counties have already enacted ordinances protecting the Second Amendment rights of their citizens (Coos, Curry, Willamette and Wheeler).

The Second Amendment Preservation Ordinance makes it illegal for county resources to be used in the enforcement of laws infringing upon Second Amendment rights. Ultimately, the enforcement of these laws will be in the jurisdiction of county law enforcement. This ordinance will prevent county law enforcement from carrying them out.

Such an ordinance could and should be enacted in Grant County as well. It will make it that much easier for Glenn Palmer, a sheriff well known for his respect of the Second Amendment, to protect our rights.

The best way of enacting such an ordinance in Grant County will be through the Grant County Court. If you value your Second Amendment rights, please encourage our local elected officials (Scott Myers, Boyd Britton and Jim Hamsher) to enact this ordinance in Grant County.

Gregg Boethin
Canyon City

Vote for someone in favor of a resource adviser

To the Editor:

This letter is in a story format. I hope to make some of you laugh, and some of you might learn something.

Two cowgirls were sitting on their horses looking out over the great divide. It used to be long standing grass, beautiful timber, creeks running wildly throughout the meadow to get to the river, fish jumping in the pond and cattle grazing peacefully without a concern.

What a shame: Nowadays, it is burnt land, 200 million board feet of timber laid to rot, homes burned to the ground, streams full of debris, dead trees and willows and leaves, old poles and wire from fences that were never repaired.

What a sad story. In my county, they are supposed to hire a resource adviser; it was budgeted for last September, but nothing has become of it. Sounds like it is poor management, yes really bad. I went to county court the other day. Only one is for the resource adviser, and the other two are more interested in broadband. I think they need help; resources will produce 100 times more money and jobs where broadband won't help the job situation. Well, I had better ride out of here and get to work. Nice visiting with you, and hope come election time they vote in the right person, in favor of a resource adviser.

Austene Trowbridge Hendrix
John Day

Concerns about walkers on road to airport

To the Editor:

I would like to address the issue of the people who walk up and down the "airport road" (Southwest Fourth Avenue in John Day). I drive this road twice a day and often find people walking on the wrong side of the road. Walkers are to walk toward the traffic, so the driver and the walker can see each other. Twice now

I have come up on walkers that are walking with the traffic, rather than against the traffic. This is very dangerous, as the walkers cannot see the cars approaching. What is even more concerning is the fact that these walkers have had earphones on and were unable to hear me coming up from behind. They were not on the side of the road; they were a step or two onto the pavement. This concerns me as the road is not very wide and, of course, has many sharp curves. If you do walk the road, please, please walk against the traffic and leave your ear buds at home. I'm concerned for everyone's safety.

Nancy Falk
John Day

Gordon Larson for county commissioner

To the Editor:

Regarding the upcoming county commissioner race, there are very important distinctions that put one of the candidate's qualifications and abilities far and above that of his opposition.

Gordon Larson has a wealth of public service experience, which will go far to advance Grant County's fiscal and social well being.

One of the main things that differentiates Gordon from the other folks running for the commissioner's office is that he truly knows how to find the middle ground, and is willing to put personal opinion aside for the good of the county.

It's time to get over the past grievances and petty issues that have a stranglehold on any real positive development of our economy. He wants to move Grant County forward with the important business of attracting and keeping talented young people and legitimate viable business interests here in our beautiful county. He has the best interest of all the citizens, not just one political group or belief system. After listening to him at a recent forum these are the very issues that I believe Gordon Larson has closest to his heart.

Vote for someone who knows how to get it done and wants to take the path that moves us forward for Grant County. Vote for Gordon Larson if you want someone who will stand up for Grant County, here at home, in Salem and Washington, D.C.

Dan Maynard
John Day

Support your local venue

To the Editor:

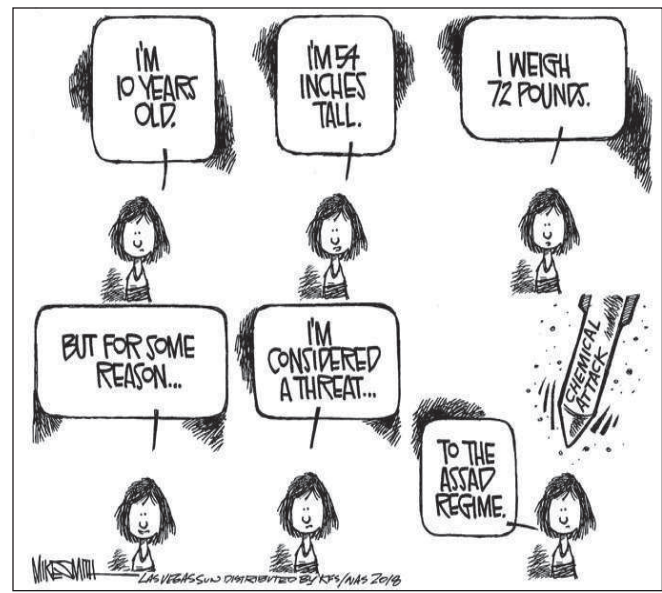
I'll keep this short and simple. Grant County has had lots of businesses coming and leaving in recent years. Some short lived; others are still here. Right now you have an opportunity to support a local business that has brought in entertainment to our area.

The bottom line in this is: If our community does not support them, and we do not buy tickets and pull up a chair, we will lose this great opportunity for Grant County. Who knows if someone else will pick up the pieces? The Madden Brothers Performing Arts Center has put a lot of work into the building and into the community and hopes that they can help keep Grant County entertained.

I strongly urge you to check out their website and look for flyers and posters of upcoming events around town. As always, you can contact the Madden brothers at maddenbrothers.us.

If the community truly values entertainment opportunities locally, we need you to support the business. Fill those chairs, or we could lose an opportunity for people to come here. We have already lost the bowling alley and other forms of entertainment too. We need you to come and support this business too. Please support your local business and keep businesses local. I hope to see you at the next performance.

Courtney Montague
Mt. Vernon



Blue Mountain EAGLE
Grant County's Weekly Newspaper

Email: www.MyEagleNews.com
Phone: 541-575-0710

John Day, Oregon

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PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY BY EO Media Group

Periodicals Postage Paid at John Day and additional mailing offices.

1 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION RATES (including online access)

Grant County	\$40
Everywhere else in U.S.	\$51
Outside Continental U.S.	\$60

Subscriptions must be paid prior to delivery

www.facebook.com/MyEagleNews @MyEagleNews

USPS 226-340

POSTMASTER — send address changes to
Blue Mountain Eagle
195 N. Canyon Blvd.
John Day, OR 97845-1187
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