

More pressing issues for Oregon

Of all the issues worthy of Oregon legislators' immediate attention, a narrow tax break for businesses would rank far, far down the list.

Yet that tax break is why Gov. Kate Brown is ordering the Legislature to convene on May 21. Having signed state legislation that takes a potential tax break away from many businesses, Brown now wants to grant one to roughly 9,000 sole proprietorships.

In Pendleton last month, Brown said that she thinks "very strongly that Oregon's small businesses need tax fairness and they need it now. They can't wait until 2019."

The governor, who just happens to be running for re-election this year, recently had a self-realization: "We have an obvious inequity in Oregon's tax system that is prejudiced against thousands of small Oregon businesses, and a simple change can fix it. I'm simply not willing to let these main street businesses — entrepreneurs, mom and pops, and start-ups — go through another tax year with unfair tax treatment as compared to their larger competitors."

Thus, Brown wants a one-day special legislative session on May 21, although it might last longer.

That tax break might be worthwhile, although the details have been sketchy. But we wonder why Brown can't let

the tax break wait for the 2019 Legislature, when she is leaving a slew of more-important issues hanging.

Brown is not calling a special session to make Oregon's unstable tax system better align with the state's economic and educational priorities.

She is not calling a special session to address our substance-abuse epidemic flowing from opioids, methamphetamine and other drugs.

She is not calling a special session to confront the well-chronicled deficiencies in the state's child welfare program.

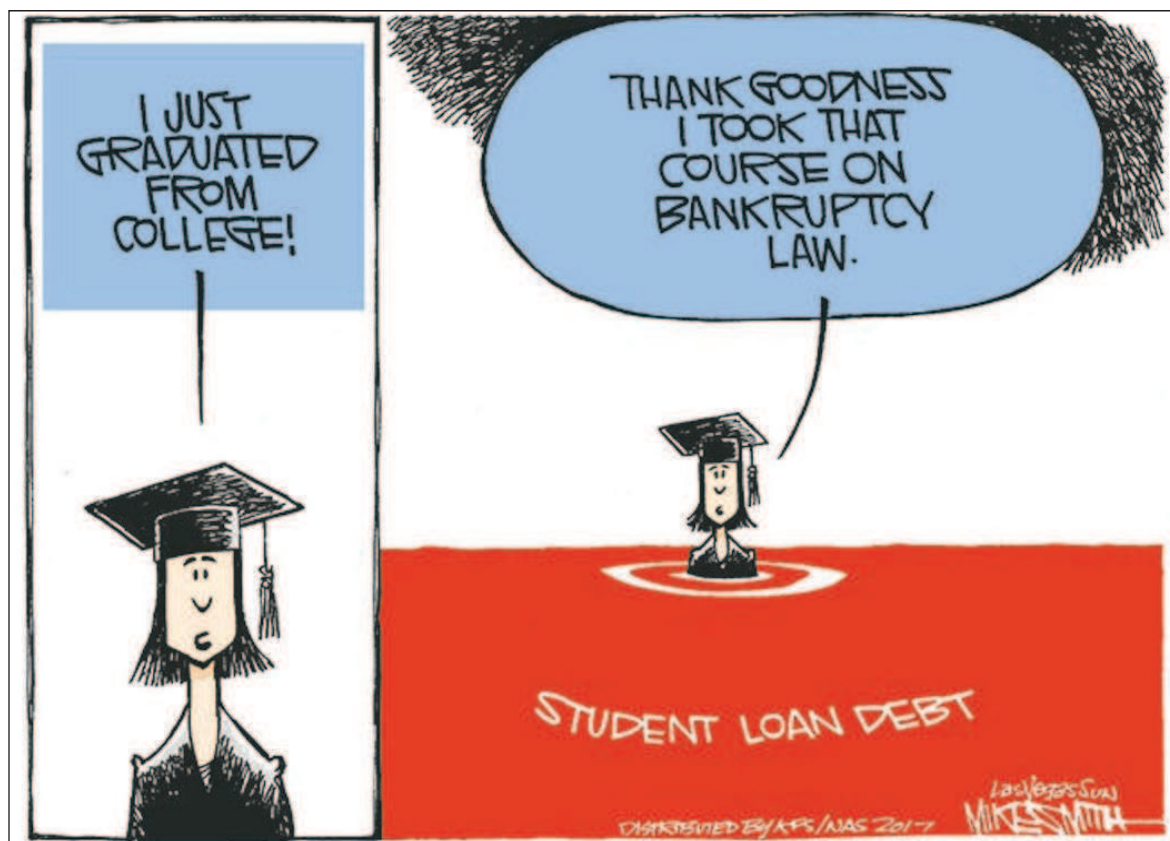
She is not calling a special session to complete needed reforms in the Oregon Public Employees Retirement System.

She is not calling a special session to tackle the widespread shortage of affordable housing across Oregon.

She is not even calling a special session to devise a new, public-supported plan for replacing the nearly obsolete Interstate 5 bridges in Portland.

And she certainly is not calling a special session to address many of the issues that have divided rural and urban Oregon.

Choose any of the above or add your own topic, and it likely would matter more to Oregonians — including legislators and businesspeople — than Brown's plan for a May 21 special session.



GUEST COMMENT

Protecting young athletes from injury

By Bob Gardner and Peter Weber
To the Blue Mountain Eagle



Bob Gardner



Peter Weber

One of the responsibilities that parents take most seriously is protecting their children from injury, whether it is buckling seat belts in a car or wearing a helmet while riding a bike. And when their kids become teenagers and want to participate in sports or other activities, parents do everything they can to keep their sons and daughters from getting hurt.

But not all injuries are caused by a twist, fall, collision or accident. Many are caused when young athletes repeat the same athletic activity so often that muscles, ligaments, tendons and bones don't have time to recover—especially among middle school and high school students. These injuries can end promising careers, cost families tens of thousands of dollars, squash dreams and literally change lives.

Examples include elbow and arm injuries to teenagers who play baseball or softball all year long, shoulder injuries to year-round swimmers, wrist and elbow injuries to gymnasts and stress fractures to soccer players.

The culprit, most often, is what's

commonly known as "sport specialization," the process of playing the same sport all year long with the goal of either gaining a competitive edge or earning a college scholarship. It involves intense, year-round training in a single sport.

Research shows that sports specialization is putting teenage athletes at risk. According to a study commissioned by the National Federation of State High School Associations and conducted by researchers from the University of Wisconsin, high school athletes who specialize in a single sport are 70 percent more likely to suffer an injury during their playing season than those who play multiple sports.

The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons says much the same. It reports that "overuse injuries" (injuries caused when an athletic activity is repeated so often that parts of the body do not have enough time to

heal) are responsible for nearly half of all sports injuries to middle school and high school students.

There is a solution. Young athletes should be encouraged to play multiple sports.

When student-athletes cross-train, they work different muscle groups and joints which, in fact, results in better overall conditioning. They also develop a new set of athletic skills like hand-eye coordination, balance, endurance, explosion and agility that are transferable to their primary sport. It's no coincidence that 30 of the 32 first-round picks in the 2017 National Football League draft played multiple sports in high school. In 2018, 88 percent of all NFL-drafted players were multi-sport athletes.

Parents can play a key role in preventing these overuse injuries by encouraging their kids to play multiple sports rather than pushing them to specialize in one sport. They will have more fun, will be less likely to suffer burnout and will actually become better athletes.

Bob Gardner is the executive director of the National Federation of State High School Associations, and Peter Weber is the executive director of the Oregon School Activities Association.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What happened to 'moral majority'?

To the Editor:

So, whatever happened to the Republican "moral majority"? It appears that the president of the United States paid \$130,000 to cover up an affair he had while the future first lady was nursing their newborn. Unless it is extinct, perhaps the "moral majority" should review the meaning of the word "hypocrisy" in the dictionary.

Fred Fitzgerald
Monument

Firearms in schools 'reckless and irresponsible'

To the Editor:

As a parent and gun owner, I am disappointed at how the conversation on "school safety" so quickly devolved into the arming of teachers and staff.

The idea of arming school faculty is an irresponsible and dangerous reaction that may sound reasonable at face value but is inherently reckless in implementation. For me to keep a gun safe in my home with children, it must be locked up in a key-less safe. The same standard applies to schools with staff and children: There is no way to completely prevent accidental discharge or irresponsible use of a firearm if it is loaded and carried on a person. However, if guns are locked up in a safe, there is little chance they can be effectively used in an active shooter situation. Secondly, most active shooter situations that I am aware of have involved the use of semi-automatic assault rifles and/

or high capacity magazines. There is very limited ability to defend oneself with a handgun against an assault rifle.

I fully support efforts to ensure the children of Grant School District 3 have a safe learning environment. To that end, I would encourage the district to seek out funding for school resource officers at all three campuses. If this is not feasible in the near future, I would propose more creative means of providing a professional law enforcement presence. Perhaps an office at each school could be provided for local law enforcement where they could share shifts to cover the school day and take care of their own administrative duties? I would be supportive of physical measures to create hardened points of entry and locking doors to outside visitors. Finally, I would encourage the school district to work with other local entities to identify and treat the root causes associated with the deadly acts that have recently occurred in schools across the United States. The mental health and emotional well-being of our children (and community) should be prioritized in order to prevent these heinous acts. Putting firearms in our schools is a reckless and irresponsible reaction with the potential to have catastrophic consequences.

Darin Toy
John Day

Safety above ridiculous laws

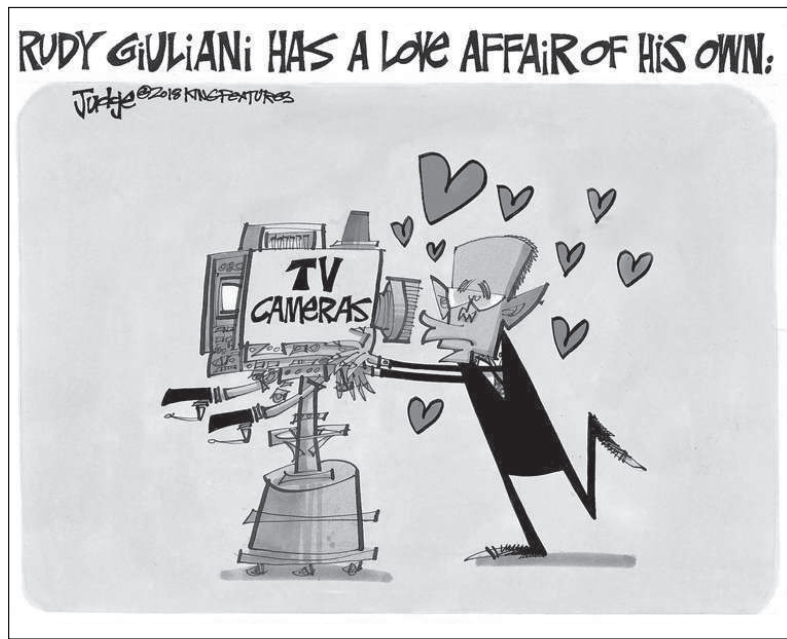
To the Editor:

On Feb. 16, I drove past this deer carcass that I had driven past a few times on previous days.

After the fourth day, I decided to take action. I pulled over into the bar ditch, completely off the highway and turned my emergency lights on to warn other drivers of my existence there along the road. As I was finishing loading the deer, I looked up the road and noticed a state police game warden stop up ahead and turn around to come back to my vehicle. He pulled over to speak to me. He quickly stated that it was illegal for me to pick up this deer off the state highway or any highway for that matter. I asked him about the ordinance in the newspaper, which said it was legal to do this. The officer told me that, though the law had passed, it had not been put into effect. I tried to reason with him by explaining to him that all I was doing was trying to protect the citizens of Grant County by removing a very real road hazard that could potentially be a real threat to driver safety. He warned me that if I am caught committing this "crime" again, he would write me a ticket. The officer then instructed me to drag the deer back out of my grandfather's pickup and leave it where I had found it. I put it into the ditch next to the highway.

It is apparent that some officers in Grant County have neglected the spirit of the law only to embrace the narrow-minded view that ridiculous ordinances take precedence over public safety. At some point, we, as citizens of Grant County, need to put safety above the ridiculousness of lawmakers who are disconnected from rural realities.

Grant LeQuieu
Mt. Vernon



WHERE TO WRITE

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- **Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Website: www.leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).
- **Oregon Legislative Information** — (For updates on bills, services, capitol or messages for legislators) — 800-332-2313.
- **Sen. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario** — 900 Court St. NE, S-301, Salem 97301. Phone: 503-986-1730. Website: www.oregonlegislature.gov/Bentz. Email: Sen.CliffBentz@oregonlegislature.gov.
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