

Say no to drug decriminalization

Oregonians may be asked next year to approve a ballot measure that would decriminalize the possession of illegal drugs. That in itself is a bad idea. Worse is the way the measure would finance improved drug treatment programs.

Initiative Petition 44 is the baby of the Drug Policy Alliance, a national organization that hopes to change the way Americans deal with drugs. It recently turned in to the Secretary of State's Office the 1,000 signatures needed to begin work on a ballot title.

While Oregonians love their legal marijuana, they may be far less willing to decriminalize everything from heroin and other opioids to methamphetamine, and with good reason. Those drugs are both addictive and dangerous, and decriminalization could make it easier for children to access them.

Perhaps the real point of IP 44 is the way it expands treatment for those with drug problems, and the way it finances that expansion.

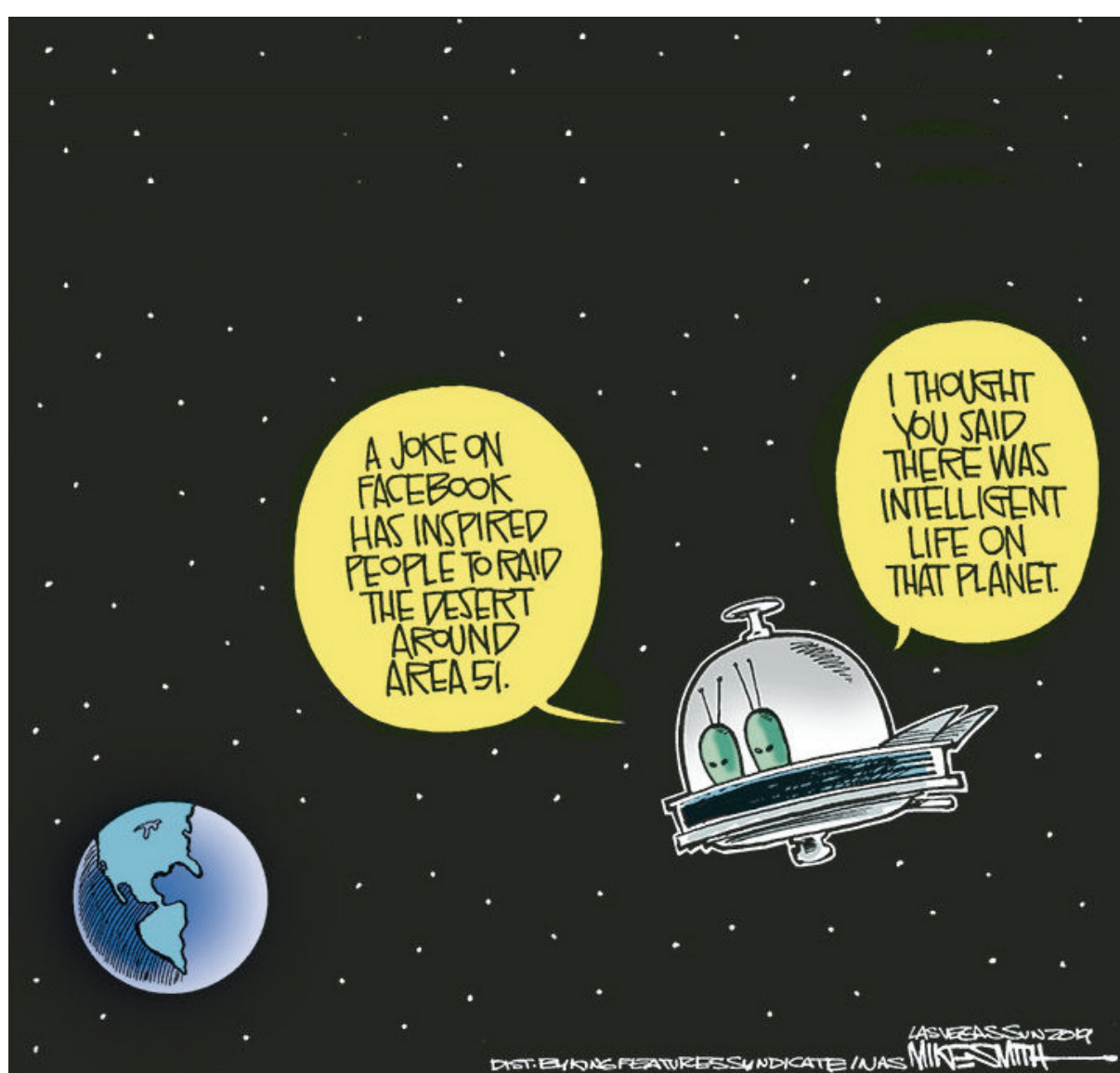
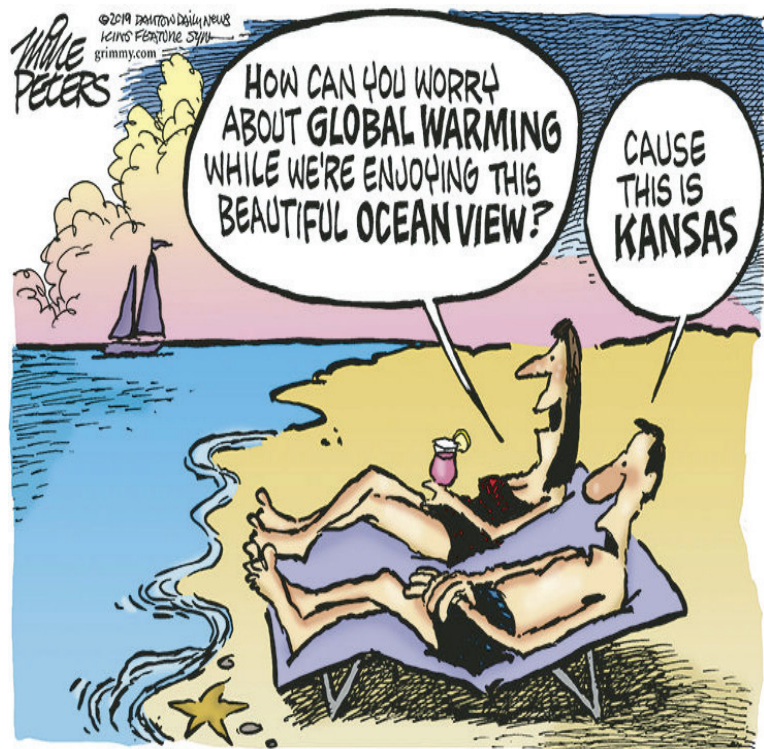
Initial estimates are that in its first year, the program envisioned in the measure would cost \$57 million, most of which would come from taxes imposed on recreational marijuana sales

that now go to cities, counties, state police and various health improvement efforts. In succeeding years, costs are expected to grow, and again, marijuana taxes would be used to finance the program, along with funds redirected from savings on prosecution and incarceration costs.

Only after all of that would the state police, cities and counties receive the tax dollars voters were promised they would receive when marijuana was made legal in Oregon.

While it's probably not surprising that some in the criminal justice system are opposed to the measure, some treatment providers oppose it, as well. They point out they're already working with the state to improve treatment options and worry that, among other things, the ballot measure includes no way to push those with addictions toward treatment programs.

Oregon voters, if they're asked to approve IP 44, should just say no. The current system may need fixing, but wholesale decriminalization is not the answer. Nor is it appropriate to short-circuit local efforts to improve drug treatment measures in Oregon, as this measure no doubt would.



GUEST COMMENT

Working together helps ensure success

All entrepreneurs and business owners need to have a solid team in place working toward the same goal.

There are many hands which can help a business be successful. This may include a spouse or partner, suppliers, a lender, accountant, attorney, employees or even a webmaster. Local government, economic development, business advisers or other agencies are often behind the scenes team members and can play vital roles.

Like any other type of relationship, there is an inner circle which has the most direct influence.

Carefully deciding exactly who to include in your inner circle and making sure those closest to you are on the same page are critical first steps. This may seem obvious, but there are many married couples or partners who find out one of them is not supportive of the decision to start a business or are hesitant to expand, pursue financing, resent the unforeseen commitment of time or the fact regular paychecks can no longer be counted on. Managers may not fully understand what



Greg Smith

is expected, and employees are sent mixed messages. Not only does this cause strife, but creative energy and effectiveness are compromised and may lead to the ultimate demise of a business.

An effective team requires good leadership. The person at the helm must demonstrate first and foremost honesty and integrity. Being a clear communicator and excellent listener who inspires others by demonstrating commitment and passion is key. Delegating and empowering others helps ignite passion in those around them and encourages creativity and innovation. After receiving information and input from others, the leader should have sound decision-making abilities, and there must be accountability when things do not go as planned. Identifying strengths and weaknesses or even making the tough decision to replace an ineffective or uncooperative team member who causes discord is essential. Working with a team is some-

times difficult for those with an entrepreneurial mindset. Entrepreneurs are often willing to take risks others do not feel comfortable with and make decisions quickly. Consulting others with different areas of expertise and experience often slows the process down but allows for brainstorming and collaboration. Having more than one person to solve problems and complete complex tasks increases productivity, creativity and chances for continued success.

In addition to accountability, the willingness to "share the win" is an important part of being a strong team leader. People who feel appreciated and see their ideas implemented are apt to continue making positive and meaningful contributions.

The common acronym "T.E.A.M. (together everyone achieves more)" is very accurate.

Greg Smith is the director of the EOU Small Business Development Center and can be reached by calling 541-962-1532. Email eousbdc@gmail.com to schedule a one-on-one, free, confidential business advising session.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sheriff should just come to work and do his job

To the Editor:

I am a frustrated Grant County taxpayer.

On Sept. 25, Oregon Public Broadcasting reported that Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack and our own Sheriff Glenn Palmer would be off to Washington, D.C., that week. The trip was being paid for by The Federation for American Immigration Reform, an anti-immigration group, so that they can attend a press conference titled "Badges and Angels" together with relatives of people killed by undocumented immigrants.

However, in an OPB interview, Sheriff Palmer states that in the two decades he has been sheriff there has never been a non-citizen booked into the

Grant County Jail. Obviously, crimes committed by illegal immigrants are not a big issue for us in Grant County.

We can all agree that the sheriff is entitled to his political opinions, whether we agree with him or not. Many in this County strongly support "Glenn" because they see him as representing their values and politics, which is, of course, the way politics work. But we should all keep in mind that the job also requires a full-time focus on the real basics of the job: keeping citizens safe and not wasting taxpayer dollars. I just wish he would prioritize his job.

Time spent hiring higher-quality deputies that can manage to stay out of jail themselves would be a good start. As a taxpayer I don't appreciate paying for deputies on administrative leave, and we have already had two on leave

just this year. Nor do I appreciate having to pay to defend the sheriff's own ethics complaints.

Meanwhile, the Blue Mountain Eagle reports that County Commissioners Palmer and Hamsher just went to Washington, D.C., to lobby for rural funding vitally important to Grant County. Actually representing our interests! Now that is what we want. Thank you!

Glenn Palmer spends too much of his time grandstanding on issues that are not very important locally, like this Washington, D.C., trip, and doing things like quitting one day and changing his mind the next, meanwhile regularly providing entertainment for the whole state. Is having a sheriff who just comes to work and does his job too much to ask?

Jim Kelly
Kimberly

LETTERS POLICY: Letters to the Editor is a forum for Blue Mountain Eagle readers to express themselves on local, state, national or world issues. Brevity is good, but longer letters will be asked to be contained to 350 words. No personal attacks; challenge the opinion, not the person. No thank-you letters. Submissions to this page become property of the Eagle. The Eagle reserves the right to edit letters for length and for content. Letters must be original and signed by the writer. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Writers should include a telephone number so they can be reached for questions. We must limit all contributors to one letter per person per month. Deadline is 5 p.m. Friday. Send letters to editor@bmeagle.com, or Blue Mountain Eagle, 195 N. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845; or fax to 541-575-1244.

WHERE TO WRITE

GRANT COUNTY

- **Grant County Courthouse** — 201 S. Humbolt St., Suite 280, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0059. Fax: 541-575-2248.
- **Canyon City** — P.O. Box 276, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0509. Fax: 541-575-0515. Email: tocc1862@centurylink.net.
- **Dayville** — P.O. Box 321, Dayville 97825. Phone: 541-987-2188. Fax: 541-987-2187. Email: dville@ortelco.net
- **John Day** — 450 E. Main St, John Day, 97845. Phone: 541-575-0028. Fax: 541-575-1721. Email: cityjd@centurytel.net.
- **Long Creek** — P.O. Box 489, Long Creek 97856. Phone: 541-421-3601. Fax: 541-421-3075. Email: info@cityoflongcreek.com.
- **Monument** — P.O. Box 426, Monument 97864. Phone and fax: 541-934-2025. Email: cityofmonument@centurytel.net.
- **Mt. Vernon** — P.O. Box 647, Mt. Vernon 97865. Phone: 541-932-4688. Fax: 541-932-4222. Email: cmtv@ortelco.net.
- **Prairie City** — P.O. Box 370, Prairie City 97869. Phone: 541-820-3605. Fax: 820-3566. Email: pchall@ortelco.net.
- **Seneca** — P.O. Box 208, Seneca

97873. Phone and fax: 541-542-2161. Email: senecaoregon@gmail.com.

SALEM

- **Gov. Kate Brown, D** — 254 State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-378-3111. Fax: 503-378-6827. Website: governor.state.or.us/governor.html.
- **Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Website: 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: oregonlegislature.gov/Bentz. Email: Sen.CliffBentz@oregonlegislature.gov.
- **Rep. Lynn Findley, R-Vale** — 900 Court St. NE, H-475, Salem 97301. Phone: 503-986-1460. Website: oregonlegislature.gov/findley. Email: Rep.LynnFindley@oregonlegislature.gov.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

- **The White House**, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20500; Phone-comments: 202-456-1111; Switchboard: 202-456-1414.



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Publisher.....Chris Rush, crush@eomediagroup.com
Editor & General Manager.....Sean Hart, editor@bmeagle.com
Reporter.....Rudy Diaz, rudy@bmeagle.com
Community News.....Angel Carpenter, angel@bmeagle.com
Sports.....Angel Carpenter, angel@bmeagle.com
Marketing Rep.....Kim Kell, ads@bmeagle.com
Administrative Assistant.....Makenna Adair, office@bmeagle.com
Office Assistant.....Alexandra Hand, office@bmeagle.com

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