

# Voters need to remain engaged in legislative activity

The Oregon Legislature is poised to approve yet another gun mandate, and while the battle lines over such issues are clearly drawn, the real lesson for voters is they must remain involved and watchful the actions of their elected lawmakers.

Late last month, the Oregon Senate voted to approve a bill to eliminate guns carried by concealed handgun licensees from state buildings.

The new bill — House Bill 2510 — will require the storage of firearms with trigger of cable locks inside a locked container or gun room.

Input on the bill is, as expected, evenly divided. That may be the only positive element to this piece of legislation — there is no ambiguity about how people feel about it.

It is difficult to see how such a bill — which essentially reaches into a resident's private home — will withstand a court challenge on at least two specific constitutional pillars, but chances are it will gain approval.

Anti-gun bills and other pieces of legislation that tackle cultural flashpoint issues are going to be the norm going into the future, and that means every voter must do all they can to stay apprised of the ambitions and workings of their elected leaders.

In this day and age, that is no easy task. Especially with the COVID-19 pandemic.

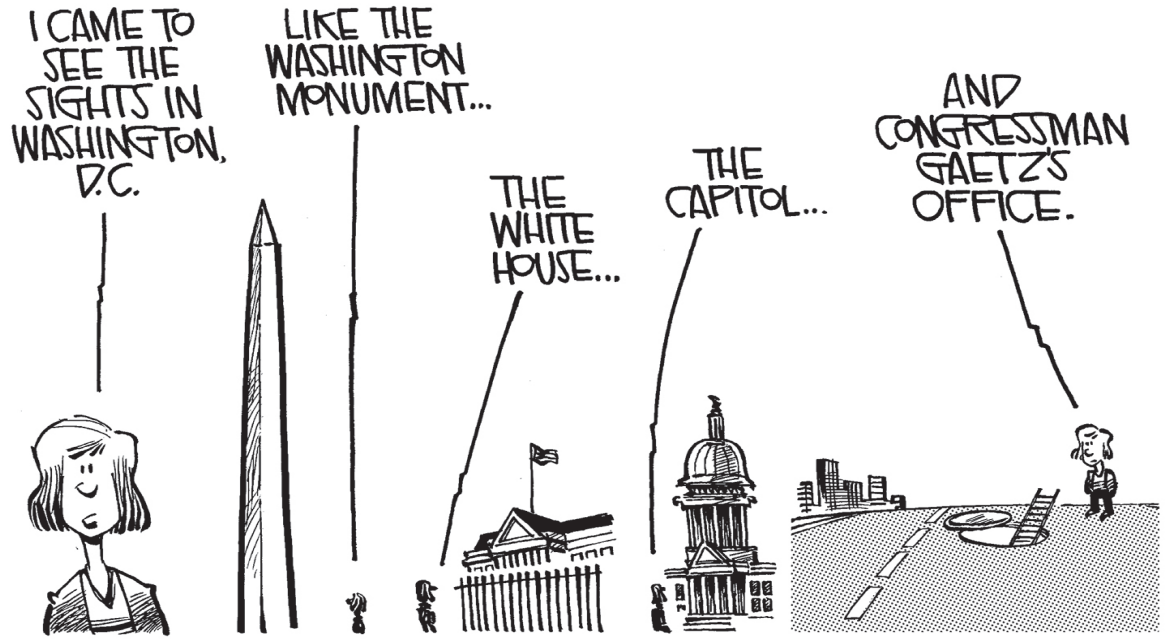
In the past there was a robust system — including the media and other watchdog groups — that keep citizens informed about legislative action. The media landscape, though, has changed. The number of reporters that cover the Oregon Capitol isn't as large as it once was, and that can be traced to economics. That means it is up to every voter to ensure they are following what is going on at the Legislature.

Thankfully, there are paths to keep up with our lawmakers. The internet is probably the easiest way to do so, and the Oregon Legislature's website is very informative and offers a list of bills that can be easily accessed.

The world is a bigger place now. Stories and events are occurring all the time and often take center stage over what can be viewed as boring news out of a legislative session.

But it isn't boring. At least not when it comes to certain pieces of legislation that can impact us all. That is why it is so important that voters stay informed and remain focused on what is going on at the Legislature.

Every voter has an obligation to stay informed.



## FARMER'S FATE

# 'The Field' gym and tanning salon

**“Y**ou should join the gym with me!” she exclaimed excitedly. “Just think of the exercise you’d get! It would be so much fun!”

My face stuck in an expression between a grimace and a smile. I tried to nod and look interested. Thankfully, my plastic grin hid most of my horror, and I was able to politely extricate myself before I accidentally agreed. With cross-fit and gym memberships the rage, I consider my continued refusal to go to the gym as my own personal resistance training.

Actually, I’m not against working out at all — I am just very particular — just any old gym won’t do. “The Field” is by far my favorite place to do a little sweating, especially as each workout is accompanied with a natural tan and free hair highlights.

I love the place so much, I’m there six days a week. There are no annual fees, and it’s open 24 hours a day. Every morning, I slip into my “gym clothes” — jeans, T-shirt and boots — grab my pocket knife and water jug, and I’m almost ready to start my workout.

Instead of the trendy protein shakes, my family’s pre-workout food is usually a fried egg, toast, orange juice or coffee, and then we’re off to “The Field.” Our warm up includes a little bending as we feed the animals, a little stretching as we reach to scratch behind the horse’s ears and a little twisting as we push the goat’s head back out of the fence where she has gotten her horns stuck.

Now that everyone is warmed up, it’s time for the real workout to begin. Sometimes the workouts are pitching



**Brianna Walker**

melons, sometimes it’s bucking bales, pulling weeds, digging holes, changing irrigation or building fence — each day is different, using alternating muscle groups — but whatever the workout entailed, at the end of the day, your muscles will feel well used.

“The Field” offers more than just strength training — there’s plenty of cardio also. It comes at random times and frequencies to keep your body always on its “A” game. This comes in the form of angry cows, or spitting llamas, or forgetting your lunchbox on the back of pickup bed that is pulling out of the driveway.

My phone rang early one morning, the neighbor’s number blazoned at the top. “I think I have one of your chickens over here, and we can’t catch it.” Catching a chicken in the middle of a 10-acre pasture, dotted only with humming alpacas is a great way for a little early morning aerobics — not to mention some great “America’s Funniest Home Video” moments. After lunging a few times and having the wings just brush my fingers as it flew over my head, I finally caught the naughty hen. Heart pounding, sweat dripping and the bird carefully sandwiched between my two hands, I finally knew why the chicken crossed the road — to help promote “The Field” as the best cardio-gym in the nation.

This summer, a friend of mine asked me to write down exactly what I eat in a given day, because she had

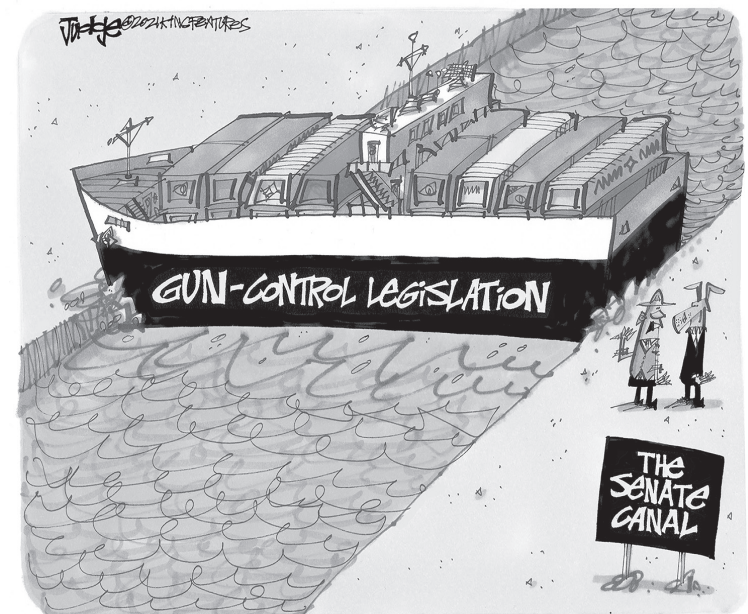
decided she was going to start whatever “diet” I was on. I laughed. I eat whatever I want, whenever I have access to it. That means I may have thirds on those cream-cheese laden mashed potatoes for supper — or I may have nothing but some stale Mexican cookies I found in the arm rest of the tractor. One day may include doughnuts for breakfast, pizza for lunch, popcorn for supper and the next day could be V8 for breakfast, watermelon for lunch and nothing for supper.

“You don’t want to eat what I eat,” I said, “you want to work like I work.” She looked skeptical, but a few days later she showed up in workout clothes, and after a quick warm up of making up some cardboard bins, she found herself catching and stacking 30,000 pounds of watermelons. It wasn’t long before she was dirtier than I’d ever seen her — but even under all that dirt and sweat, one could see proud, glistening muscles. Her husband said upon arrival at home, she went straight to the tub and laid down, too tired to even stand with a hot shower pouring over her.

“The Farm” workout: a series of strenuous exercises that help convert fats, sugars and starches into aches, pains and cramps.

“You ready for a daily membership?” my husband teased her later. I couldn’t tell exactly what she responded with, but it sounded something like, “I really don’t need buns of steel — I’d be happy with buns of cinnamon.”

*Brianna Walker occasionally writes about the Farmer’s Fate for the Blue Mountain Eagle.*



## GUEST COMMENT

# Join the Citizen Review Board

By John Nichols

The Citizen Review Board is Oregon’s statewide foster care review program that reviews the case plans of children and families involved in the child welfare system to determine if their placements and services are appropriate.

Each child in foster care is reviewed by law to have their case reviewed by a judge or a panel of local citizens (Citizen Review Board) every six months to ensure the foster child is receiving adequate care.

A local Citizen Review Board in Grant and Harney counties is comprised of volunteers of the counties who are willing to give one day every other month (two to eight hours depending on the number of cases) to review cases. In reviewing plans and services for children and youth, local boards seek to ensure

that each abused or neglected child has a safe and nurturing permanent home as quickly as possible and that everyone in the case gets the services they need.

The CRB invite parents, foster parents, attorneys, caseworkers, court-appointed special advocates (CASAs), other interested parties and the child, if appropriate, to attend the CRB review and discuss plans for the family and the child. It is important for every party to have a voice. The board then makes findings and recommendations to the circuit court and the Department of Human Services Child Welfare.

The mission of the Citizen Review Board is to provide a citizen voice on the safety, stability and supervision of children in foster care through impartial case review and advocacy. Our vision is for citizens to shape public policy and actively promote conditions to ensure that

every child lives in a safe, secure, healthy and permanent home, preserving families whenever possible.

Volunteers are screened and trained to serve. They are appointed by the chief justice of the Oregon Supreme Court and sworn in by the judge of the Grant and Harney Circuit Court.

If you are interested in looking into this volunteer opportunity further, please feel free to contact me or go to <http://www.courts.oregon.gov/crb>. You can submit an application at: CRB APPLICATION.

Currently, due to the COVID-19 restrictions, we are doing all reviews remotely on Webex. We hope to return to in-person reviews in October.

*John Nichols is the Citizen Review Board field manager for Baker, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, Union and Wallowa counties.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### ‘We live by way different standards’

To the Editor:

In regards to last week’s paper, I would like to say that “assault rifles” were not designed “only to kill other humans.” The AR was originally designed for our infantry. The U.S. military uses AR to this day. Protecting our U.S. troops!

And the troops standing outside the state capitol are carrying them as well.

As far as carrying a pistol, that is a person’s right. Oregon is an open carry state. If more honest people carried, there would be less stores robbed and less crimes taking place!

As for statements on people’s masks and signs on people’s private

property, that is their right. It’s called freedom of speech!

Being a part of Idaho makes more sense than trying to get the governor or any of the west side majority to understand our rural way of living out here. We live by way different standards than the west side. And they do not understand that.

**Chelzy Cox**  
*Monument*

## WHERE TO WRITE

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**• Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: 503-986-1180. Website: [leg.state.or.us](http://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, [oregonlegislature.gov](http://oregonlegislature.gov).  
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**• Pending Bills:** For information on bills in Congress. Phone: 202-225-1772.

**Blue Mountain EAGLE**  
 Published every Wednesday by **ecMEDIA group**  
 MEMBER OREGON NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

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 One year ..... \$51  
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 send address changes to:  
 Blue Mountain Eagle  
 195 N. Canyon Blvd.  
 John Day, OR 97845-1187  
 USPS 226-340

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