

Urban and rural areas should unite to govern

If the state ended just east of the Cascade Mountains, Ballot Measure 13 would have passed, Denny Smith would be governor and Ballot Measure 18, the initiative that restricts hunting, would have failed miserably.

Election results from Central, Eastern and Southern Oregon stand in stark contrast to results from the Willamette Valley, showing a sharp split in Oregonians' values and beliefs. If it weren't for high population numbers in Portland and Eugene, the state would have voted much more conservatively in Tuesday's election.

Maybe that's why governor-elect John Kitzhaber made a vow to reach out to rural areas, and why the Denny Smith campaign turned down speaking opportunities in Western Oregon, including at this University, so Smith could meet with his supporters in rural Oregon.

Although Kitzhaber won in the Portland area and in Lane County by a 2 to 1 ratio, he lost most of rural Oregon, including all of Southern and Eastern Oregon. He won only Deschutes and Wasco counties in Central Oregon. Denny Smith carried 22 of 36 counties.

Measure 13 followed suit with the governor's race. The anti-gay rights initiative passed in 24 counties and failed in 12 counties. The Oregon Citizens Alliance gained much of its support in rural areas like Crook, Josephine and Klamath Counties. Douglas County, just over an hour away from Eugene, passed the measure by more than 11,000 votes. Without ballots counted from the Portland area and Lane County, Oregon would have an anti-gay rights initiative.

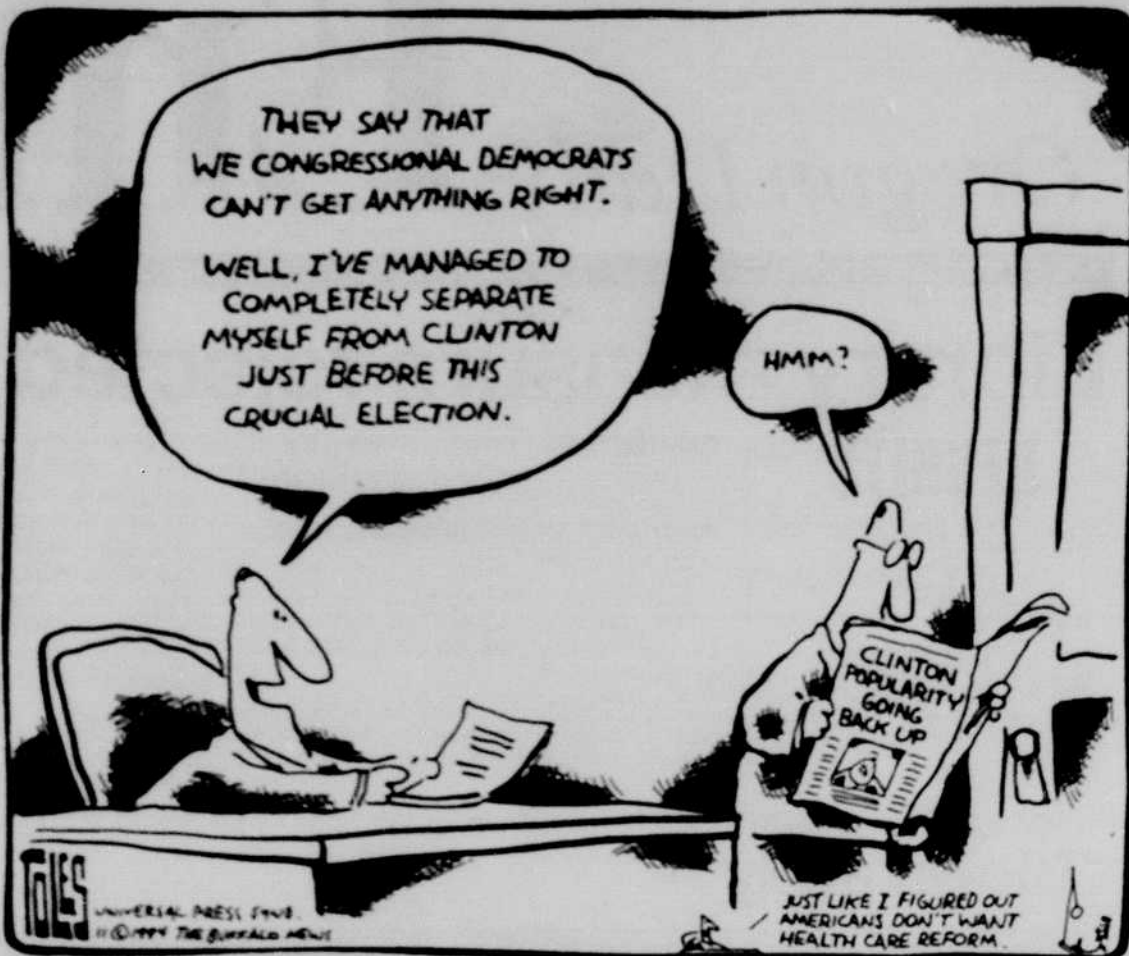
Likewise, Measure 18, which passed statewide, actually only passed in nine counties. The rural counties most affected by the hunting measure defeated the measure. However, urban areas like Portland and Eugene have enough people to outweigh their votes.

The rural-urban split represented by Tuesday's vote should serve as a warning for our new government. It means that Kitzhaber needs to do a lot of ground work to appeal to the large portion of the state that didn't support him. It also means that the OCA can lick its wounds and start over because the group knows it has a wide base of support throughout most of the state.

Although it carries the highest percentage of the state's population, the Willamette Valley is just one small portion of the state. Oregon can't afford to ignore the interests of people living in the largest areas of the state. Some of the state's most critical issues, especially those involving Oregon's diminishing natural resources, have their most direct effects on citizens living in these rural areas.

State officials need to bring attention to rural interests and educate those living in rural areas about state goals and problems. Eastern and Western Oregonians must communicate for the benefit of the entire state.

State government is being decided by only one portion of the state. Although many urbanites may disagree with some rural view points, it's important that all Oregonians have an equal chance for a fair government.



OPINION Clinton to blame for defeats



BRIAN WOMACK

After seeing the Democratic Party decimated Tuesday, I feel as if I'm standing in front of a huge buffet as I sit down to write this column. With so many choices, I'm having a hard time determining what to pick first.

I guess I'll start with the numbers. With the Republicans picking up 50-plus seats in the House and nine seats in the Senate, I must admit I'm more excited than blind dogs in a meat house.

American voters have spoken three simple points: We don't like Clinton. We don't like Clinton. We don't like Clinton.

Just about everyone for whom he campaigned ended up with a concession speech the morning after the election.

The GOP landslide left the administration scrambling for answers. By Wednesday, Clinton's virtual concession speech gave a portion of them. He said it was partly his fault.

He could be right. Maybe there are three more reasons the GOP wasted the Democrats: We love Republicans. We love Republicans. We love Republicans.

That could be easily seen on Wednesday when no Republican incumbent in a House, Senate or governor's race lost.

No, my friends, don't let anyone tell you this was only an anti-incumbent election. It was clearly a mandate from the people that we want a different direction in Washington, D.C. — namely, one to the right.

Issues such as a balanced-budget amendment, a line-item veto and a middle-class tax cut struck

a positive chord with the people of this great nation.

Finally, conservative issues such as these and others will take a front seat in the legislative agenda. And as it looks now, the Republicans will probably be controlling the executive agenda as well.

Unless the Republicans completely bumble away the next two years, they should get the White House in 1996. With the country moving to the right, it's inevitable.

Despite the Republicans (and the Democrats, for that matter) having no extremely strong presidential candidates now, if they do indeed do well these next two years, someone will rise to the nomination — be it Newt Gingrich, Bob Dole or whoever.

Clinton will undoubtedly have a difficult time in the coming months since he will not only be dealing with a more conservative Republican party but also a more liberal Democratic party.

Many of the seats the GOP picked up were from the moderate suburbs in the Midwest and Rust Belt, as well as the conservative South.

Now the "leftovers" are the more liberal Democrats, instead of their conservative counterparts.

While Clinton moves to the right to appease a conservative majority, his party will demand he move to the left. He may appear to be even more of a waffler than before.

The nation's governors aren't on Clinton's side, either. The trend is to have 30 Republican governors, 19 Democrats and one independent. A good example of the tidal wave was in New York where the liberal dinosaur himself, Mario Cuomo, lost to a no-name state legislator, George Pataki.

Even Oregon Gov.-elect John Kitzhaber, who won as a Democrat, will have to face both a Republican House and Senate

for the first time since the 1955 session.

On this buffet I've been drawing from, though, all is not good. The 16th item on the bar is an E-coli infested dish. Just as important as all these developments is something else that happened at the ballot box.

Ballot Measure 16 seems to be passing. The absentee ballots should be counted by the end of the day. If the measure passes, doctor-assisted suicide would become technically legal for the first time in the Western world.

Already, Robert Castagna, executive director of the Oregon Catholic Conference in Portland, has said Catholic hospitals statewide would "conscientiously object" to the measure if it passes.

It has also been reported that half the doctors in this state would object to performing such an inhumane act.

Dr. Neal Rendelman of Portland's Old Town Clinic said this measure would destroy the relationship between patient and physician. "We (may) soon find ourselves a magnet for the depressed, the sick and the bizarre of the civilized universe, and then they'll be a backlash," he said.

As I've said before, this measure will only cheapen life. The slippery slope of ethics people talk about will get more slippery.

It could be that 20 years from now someone could be using the medical field to kill off anyone they think doesn't quite measure up to who they think is an ideal citizen. The scary thing is, we don't know who the "they" is to define it.

But I hope the E-coli will be pulled off the menu before the absentees are all counted.

I'm glad most of the nation served up something that will settle well with everyone.

Brian Womack is a columnist for the Emerald.

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