

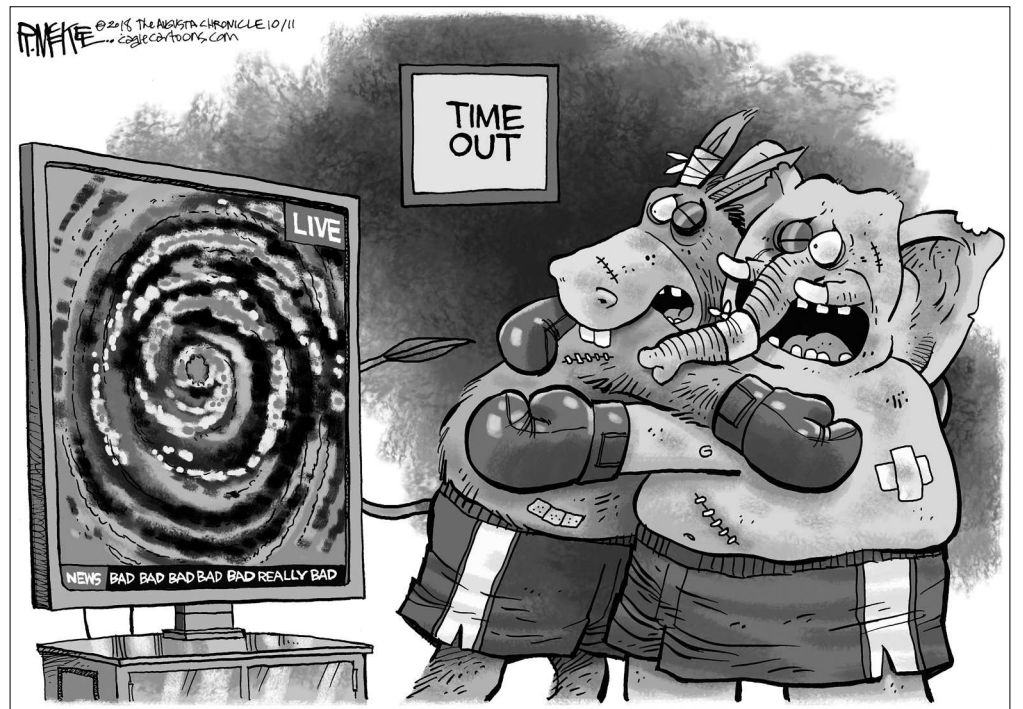
Write to us

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Observer welcomes letters to the editor. Letters are limited to 350 words and must be signed and carry the author's address and phone number (for verification purposes only). We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We do not fact check. We will not publish poetry, consumer complaints against businesses or personal attacks against private individuals. Thank-you letters are discouraged. Letter writers are limited to one letter every two weeks. Email your letters to news@lagrandeobserver.com or mail them to La Grande Observer, 1406 5th St., La Grande, Ore., 97850.

Letters deadline

The Observer does not run endorsements of more than 350 words. The Observer will institute a deadline for letters to the editor, so we can be fair with all the letters we receive and allow for responses before Election Day if necessary. Please submit your endorsement letters to the editor by noon Friday, Oct. 26. You can email them to news@lagrandeobserver.com, drop them off at our La Grande location, or mail them to The Observer, 1406 Fifth St., La Grande, 97850. We will publish our last letters on Friday, Nov. 2. Election Day is Nov. 6.



On the Fence

Democratic Party of Oregon's Platform: Securing a more just and prosperous future for all

The Democratic Party of Oregon's 2018 platform preamble states: "The Democratic Party of Oregon is committed to the principles and positions contained in this platform in order to secure a more just and prosperous future for all Oregonians. We recognize and embrace shared rights and responsibilities and affirm that every person is guaranteed rights to life, liberty, equity and the pursuit of happiness. In exercising these rights for ourselves, we are respectful of the interdependent web of life on this planet."

"We promise to work to uphold the protections granted to us by our state and national constitutions and to act on our responsibilities to assure that 'We the People' resume governing this nation. We steadfastly oppose any attempt to dilute those rights and liberties in the name of political convenience or security. At

a time when our nation is suffering under misguided leadership that seeks to divide us and turn back the clock to a supposed "greater" America, we declare that the greatness of our nation is in its diversity and its ability to move forward with full understanding of our historical strengths and weaknesses. We invite all Oregonians to join us in affirming our determination that Oregon become a beacon of opportunity, tolerance, and freedom."

In an April 17 press release (available at www.dpo.org), Molly Woon wrote, "After months of work, hundreds of hours of input, and the largest platform convention in recent history, the Democratic Party of Oregon released their 2018 party platform and legislative priorities today."

The press release continued: "The DPO 2018 Platform is a critical component of shaping our Party's future. It is the foundation

of who we are as a Party and articulates our vision for Oregon and our country," said Valdez Bravo, vice chair of the DPO and chair of the platform convention. "Over 500 Democrats with diverse backgrounds and perspectives came together to create a Party platform that reflects the interests and addresses the needs of working- and middle-class people everywhere."

"Oregon Democrats began the process of drafting the platform in October 2017. Multiple workgroups, each focused on one of eleven different Articles, or policy areas, met virtually and in person to construct what became the 'planks' of each Article. These groups also proposed legislative action items, also known as LAIs. The platform is crafted by the party every two years."

"Through grassroots advocacy and in-depth policy discussions, our LAIs represent where Oregon

Democrats see the greatest need and urgency for action," said Jeanne Atkins, chair of the DPO. "This list of 22 legislative items is a key tool in how we convey our highest priorities to our elected Democratic leaders."

"The 2018 Democratic Party of Oregon Priority Legislative Action Items call on lawmakers to create, adopt, or implement legislation. The top three items, as voted on by members of the platform convention are as follows:

1. As health care is a human right, adopt an equitable, high-quality, comprehensive, universal, publicly-funded healthcare system including general, preventative, and emergency care, plus vision, dental, hearing, prescription drugs, long-term care, substance abuse, hospice care, and mental health services at the state or federal level.

2. Swiftly enact the Clean Energy Jobs Bill and continue to reduce greenhouse

gases based on full life cycle emissions to meet the Paris Climate Agreement, fund renewable energy, energy efficiency, promote carbon sequestration, and fund training and job creation, especially for the benefit of rural, low-income, and minority communities.

3. Amend the U.S. and Oregon constitutions to clarify that rights protected by the U.S. Constitution are the rights of natural persons only, and government shall regulate, limit or prohibit campaign contributions and expenditures to ensure corporations and wealthy individuals do not dominate the political process.

"Delegates from all over the state debated ideas on how to make the lives of Oregonians better. The rigorous process was a positive experience that strengthened our statewide bonds. Oregon Democrats largely agree on the Platform, the defining document of who we

UNION COUNTY PROGRESSIVES/ DEMOCRATS

are as a state political Party," said Bravo. "We are the big tent party — and the people inside are amazing."

Readers, if you share the values and aspirations of the Democratic Party of Oregon 2018 Platform and want to secure a more just and prosperous future for all Oregonians, make sure to vote in the upcoming Nov. 6 general election. Working together, we the people will promote the right to life, liberty, equity and the pursuit of happiness. This is our privilege, right and responsibility.

Cheryl Simpson
Union County Progressives
Union County Democrats

Editor's Note: The Republican writer did not submit an On The Fence piece for this week's topic

Your views

Dall: Mona Williams has genuine, down-to-earth Eastern Oregon values

To the Editor:

I have practiced law in Union and Wallowa counties for more than 25 years. I practiced against the Honorable Mona K. Williams when she was in private practice. I practiced against her when she was the Wallowa County District Attorney. During that time, I always found her to be highly professional, ethical, fair, prepared and respectful. I appreciated the way she practiced law, even though we were on opposite sides.

I have now had the privilege of appearing in front of Mona as a circuit court judge. She has demonstrated the same qualities as judge as she did as an attorney and

district attorney. She has the experience, knowledge and temperament necessary for the position. I also admire her genuine, down-to-earth Eastern Oregon values.

I fully support Judge Mona K. Williams for Circuit Court Judge.

Rick Dall
Attorney at Law
La Grande

West: Mona Williams has impressive work ethic

To the Editor:

As a former judge of Union and Wallowa counties I had a unique perspective to observe both candidates for judge. Both individuals appeared before me often.

Because of ethical constraints, judicial candidates cannot take positions on legal

issues. Consequently judicial races are filled with pabulum about being fair and often turn into a personality contest. I believe it is helpful to look at the experience of each candidate. In my opinion, Mona Williams is clearly the more qualified candidate for the job.

Mona has experience both defending and prosecuting criminal defendants. She has extensive experience in handling civil cases including custody matters before she became Wallowa County District Attorney in 2007.

She was a strong advocate for victims' rights and for holding defendants accountable for their crimes. She is a strong believer in drug court where addicts and alcoholics are given an opportunity to recover and lead productive lives. She included DUI defendants in treatment court and obtained

funding for treatment court.

Mona is a team player who knows how to collaborate with community partners to improve the justice system. She obtained donations to fund a child abuse assessment center in Enterprise. This assessment center allowed victims of child abuse to be interviewed in Enterprise within 48 hours rather than having to wait up to four weeks to be interviewed in La Grande. A child abuse assessment center is an objective agency not affiliated with the police where victims of child abuse are interviewed and examined so that an objective decision can be made as to whether to prosecute the suspect.

Mona is fair. In her position as DA she wielded considerable power. In my opinion her plea offers were

fair but she was not afraid to go to trial if necessary. She demonstrated a strong knowledge of the rules of evidence. Her integrity is beyond reproach. Her work ethic is impressive.

If you have not seen Mona out campaigning much it is because she is busy doing the work of a circuit judge. I strongly recommend Mona Williams for judge.

Russ West
Retired 10th Judicial District
Court Judge

Vandervlugt: Electing Wes Williams for judge will be positive step for our community

To the Editor:

I have known Wes Williams since my family moved next door to his family more

than a dozen years ago. I have served on two different juries and I have also been a witness in a case in which he was representing a client. Wes was very thorough, thoughtful, respectful, and well prepared.

I can always tell when Wes is working on a case because he is up and out the door early. He will also work into the night and on weekends to make sure that his client is getting the best representation possible. He is very passionate about that.

When I was deployed to Iraq, Wes and his family were here for my family. He is a good neighbor. Electing Wes Williams for judge will be a positive step for our community.

Tim Vandervlugt
La Grande

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