

Your views

LETTERS

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and civil justice in Oregon. I have great respect for Wes Williams' thoughtful and balanced legal positions and, particularly, his personal integrity.

Please join me in voting for Wes Williams for judge.

*Tim McCarthy
La Grande*

Brown: McLeod-Skinner determined to represent district

To the Editor:

I wrote several weeks ago about how impressed I was by Jamie McLeod-Skinner and her determination to represent our district. I was inspired in part by her listening skills and effort to find consensus.

She was trying hard to hear all points of view and searching for common ground. Contrast this with the incumbent, who has stopped sponsoring open-style forums, caters to the corporations who line his pockets and has, for all practical purposes, abandoned his own district.

He claims to have the answer to the opioid epidemic, yet gets more money than any other representative from Big Pharma.

Only 15 percent of his revenues come from in-state contributions. Sixty-three percent of his money comes from PACs — substantially more than is true for most representatives. He claims to have the answers to the forest health/wildfire crisis, yet he has catered to outside corporate timber interests for years, helping them get out high dollar big trees while leaving a mess of poorly managed second growth. He denies climate change despite the overwhelming consensus.

For the past year and a half, he has avoided town halls and public forums. He listens to the PACs and corporate donors. Why is Walden afraid to hear from us?

*Ann Brown
Union*

Webb: Jamie listens to us

To the Editor:

I'm voting for Jamie McLeod-Skinner. She shows up. She's driven more than (40,000) miles visiting the small towns in our expansive Congressional District 2 more than once. She talks to everyone — bankers, businessmen, health care providers, clergy, councilmen, ranchers, veterans, students and folks like me. And she listens to what we say.

Walden is unavailable at his office, on the phone, or by mail. When I send him personal letters or emails, his response is a slick policy statement that doesn't acknowledge my question. He has even informed me he does not respond to "mass emails" or petitions.

Mr. Walden receives millions of dollars from political action campaigns and pharmacy corporations outside of our voting district. Those corporations have his attention. Not us. Jamie's donations average \$100 from in-state contributors, like you and me.

Jamie has good ideas to create a better rural Oregon. Our district needs and deserves an informed, dedicated representative in Washington, D. C.

Join me in voting for Jamie McLeod-Skinner on Nov. 6.

*Cathy Webb
La Grande*

Sarrett: Mona Williams will protect rights of responsible gun owners

To the Editor:

As a sportsman, gun owner and life-long resident of Northeast Oregon, I join retired Judge Eric Valentine and many, if not most of the legal and law enforcement community, in supporting Mona K. Williams for circuit court judge of the 10th Judicial District.

I have known Mona for more than 50 years, and she has always displayed the highest level of integrity, honesty, fairness and understanding. Having grown up and lived in Wallowa County for most of her life, Mona understands and appreciates the unique challenges of life in rural communities. She has and will continue to apply the law fairly to both the victims and defendants in a way that strives to create solutions. The kind of solutions that won't push problems further down the road.

It has been suggested that Mona is not strong on the 2nd Amendment, which protects gun ownership rights. I can assure you that nothing is further from the truth. Mona's father, whom I knew very well,

worked most of his career in the woods as a log truck driver and like many in this area hunted deer and elk every fall to provide meat for his family. His hard work and her own time in the woods, much of it at hunting camp, helped to instill a deep appreciation for the protection and management of our natural resources, including our wildlife. Mona is surrounded by a family of responsible hunters and gun owners, including her own sons, and will continue to protect 2nd Amendment rights for all responsible gun owners.

Mona was strongly encouraged to apply to fulfill the term of retiring Judge West and was found to be the most experienced, most qualified and best choice overall. I believed it then and I continue to believe it now. I am voting for Mona and I encourage everyone and particularly sportsmen to consider giving her your support also.

*Chuck Sarrett
La Grande*

Yurgel: Sheriff Rasmussen, please keep your promise

To the Editor:

I am the grandchild of immigrants. All my grandparents were born in another country and fled to America trying to stay alive. I am horrified that Oregon's Sanctuary Law is under attack.

I write this as an open letter to Sheriff Rasmussen. Please rescind your support for repealing the Sanctuary Law. If there are legal complications, or needed clarifications, surely these could be resolved by modifying the law rather than repealing it. If there are difficulties around federal funding, surely these too could be resolved by other means. Please uphold the ideal of sanctuary and keep your promise to the group of us who asked you about this back in early 2017.

Let us keep Oregon's Sanctuary Law in place.

*Danae Yurgel
La Grande*

Mollerstrom: Wes Williams will ensure all parties are treated with equal respect

To the Editor:

I want to add my voice in supporting Wes Williams for the 10th Judicial District. I have known Wes and his family for a number of years. First and foremost, Wes is a "family man." Professionally, there is no doubt in my mind, based on my interactions with Wes Williams, that he will make an outstanding circuit court judge.

As a caseworker (now retired) for the Department of Human Services-Child Welfare for a number of years, and former DHS-CW Caseworker of the Year, I have been involved in several court hearings in multiple jurisdictions. Court hearings in Family Court are a very stressful event for everyone involved as the stakes are high, especially in Termination of Parental Rights proceedings. Throughout the life of a case, there are several court hearings with judicial determinations.

I can honestly say that in my professional court experiences, caseworkers are often scapegoated and/or marginalized by varying legal defense counsel and occasionally by the presiding judge. It is with full confidence that this type of court environment would never occur while Wes Williams is presiding judge. Never.

As a lawyer, Wes consistently demonstrates a professional demeanor before, during and after court proceedings. As a judge, Wes Williams will ensure all parties are treated with equal respect while also ensuring due process is followed in accordance with state and federal law.

Join me in voting Wes Williams for circuit court judge come Election Day, Nov. 6.

*Jim Mollerstrom
La Grande*

Koza: Mona Williams is worthy of our continued confidence in her skills and abilities

To the Editor:

History was made this year. Mona K. Williams was the first woman appointed to serve as Circuit Court Judge in Union County.

Following the retirement of Judge West, there was a thorough vetting process before Mona was appointed to serve as judge. Several candidates were interviewed and were investigated by the Oregon State Police. The detectives talked to colleagues, attorneys Mona had faced in court, her staff, her neighbors and her family. The position of judge is a non-partisan position but it speaks volumes

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.

We run the letters on a first come, first served basis.

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.

for Mona's credentials that she is a Republican and was appointed to serve by a governor who is a Democrat. Appointing Mona K. Williams not only reflected respect and confidence in her abilities. It demonstrates this is the right time for a female Circuit Court Judge in Union County.

How should we judge a judge? By integrity and character; judgment and intellectual capacity; fairness; experience; industry and diligence; judicial temperament; professional ability and knowledge of the law; general reputation; and civic and community activities.

Mona K. Williams has proven worthy in all of those categories. She was a founding member of the Board of the Wallowa Valley Health Care Foundation. She was the chair of the multidisciplinary team to investigate and prevent both child abuse and elder abuse. She volunteered with Legal Aid Services of Oregon. She was a member of the Oregon State Bar's Local Professional Responsibility Committee that investigates ethical violations by attorneys.

Mona K. Williams' current service as a circuit court judge is her best way of interviewing for the position. She is now serving as our circuit court judge and is doing an outstanding job. She is already well respected by the jurors and attorneys for her judicial expertise and her ability to handle difficult cases. Nothing succeeds like success.

Mona K. Williams has excelled and is worthy of our vote and our continued confidence in her many skills and abilities. We need integrity in the Circuit Court. We need Mona K. Williams.

*Zee Koza
La Grande*

Williams: Wes Williams will work hard every day to keep our community great

To the Editor:

As Wes' wife and a fellow lawyer, I have worked with him for more than 20 years — at the office, in court and at home. I am in awe of his legal abilities and work ethic.

I have heard so many stories of Wes' childhood, from him, his family and friends. When most kids were playing, he and his brothers worked on the ranch their father managed, on their grandfather's farm and in construction. He pulled weeds, dug ditches, picked berries, caught chickens, built pole barns and roofed.

His work ethic is evident in his law practice and will carry over should he be elected judge. In 22 years, he has rarely taken more than a week off a year. At the same time, he is home for dinner almost every night, instilling in me and our children the importance of eating dinner together. I cannot thank him enough for this now that our children are 17 and 20 and dinner is often our only quality family time.

I love how Wes treats his clients, especially the juveniles and young adults in legal trouble. He is patient, listens to them and values their opinions. At the same time, as when he was a high school teacher, he holds them accountable. He expects them to be honest, stand up straight, look people in the eye when talking with them, work hard and know there are consequences for their actions.

I also know Wes will strive to be the non-partisan judge we deserve. He was mentored by Judge Wes Brown when we first moved here, often spending Saturday afternoons with him, and then by Judge Pope from Baker County and Judge Wallace from Umatilla County. It is telling that after Pope and Wallace retired and returned to practicing law, they chose to work with Wes.

I presume, like me, they were drawn to Wes because of his integrity, work ethic, strong understanding of the law and great sense of humor.

Wes will work hard every day to keep our

community great. You will not regret voting Wes Williams for judge.

*Jennifer Williams
La Grande*

McDaniel: Good people make great judges, and Mona Williams is a good person

To the Editor:

I write this letter to urge the citizens of Union and Wallowa counties to vote for Judge Mona K. Williams.

I worked with Mona K. Williams in her capacity as Wallowa County District Attorney for nearly 10 years and have tried many cases against her opponent. It is with these experiences in mind that I endorse her.

I have had the pleasure of appearing in front of her now that she has taken the bench. I can attest that she is fair, thorough and compassionate to both sides of every issue. She treats defendants with respect, and it is clear she wants every party to have an opportunity to be heard. She is an honest person with outstanding character and integrity. Good people make great judges, and Mona is a good person.

Mona is the only candidate with prosecution experience. She is the only candidate who has worked with law enforcement to build a case to take to trial and keep a victim safe. I know when my office puts a victim on the stand, she will make sure the courtroom is a safe place for them to testify, while ensuring the defendant's rights are protected. She takes her commitments seriously, and is the hardest working lawyer I have ever known.

Judge Mona K. Williams respects law enforcement, believes in holding offenders accountable and is a champion for victims and children. Vote for Judge Mona K. Williams.

*Kelsie McDaniel
Union County District Attorney*

Wilson: Buffalo Peak is a gem

Upon recently spending some time in the Willamette Valley and golfing some of the courses in that area, we felt compelled to express our thoughts on what a gem Union County has in Buffalo Peak Golf Course.

We found nothing could compare to its playability, fees, topography and beauty. Golfers who live in this area are truly fortunate to have this golf course available to them.

*Nita and Jeff Wilson
Elgin*

Huffman: Mona Williams is best qualified for judge

To the Editor:

I believe Mona Williams is the best qualified candidate for judge. I have worked with Mona bringing potential livestock cases when she was the District Attorney in Wallowa County. I always found her to be very thorough, fair and demanding of factual information. She was always balanced in her approach.

I met with Wes Williams and enjoyed our visit and his viewpoints. I agree he is hardworking and passionate about his profession as a defender, and a very nice man. Having said this, his view and expertise isn't as broad and balanced, in my opinion.

An important note, cases have already been vetted by the investigating agency and by the district attorney for accuracy and merit before they ever hit the courts. It takes broad experience to manage these trials and requires fair and defensible decisions by the presiding judge. Mona has this experience.

I urge you to strongly consider joining me in support of our current judge, Mona Williams.

*Rodger Huffman
Union*

