The Observer

Your views

LETTERS

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lives of the youth before him, and he treated it as such.

The combination of showing compassion and teaching accountability is a rare skill set in juvenile justice, and Wes has it. I can attest to seeing it firsthand and it had a positive impact on all of the youth involved.

It's refreshing to move away from the divisive claims of candidates being either Democrat or Republican and focus more on the type of person they are at heart and what type of leader they can be. There seems to be no better way to do that than to look at the background of a person and decide for yourself. I have witnessed the qualities Wes possesses that help youth develop accountability while also enabling them to learn and grow in the face of adversity.

I appreciate Wes and his approach to juvenile justice, and have the utmost confidence he will serve us proudly as the next circuit court judge.

> Odin Miller Union

Dianne Williams: Wes Williams will not be swayed by bias or political pressure

To the Editor:

Please join me in supporting Wes Williams for judge. I worked as a legal assistant for 20 years, approximately 15 of those years in this area. While I have never worked for Wes directly, I have worked on cases involving multiple parties/attorneys in the same lawsuit. Wes is always prepared.

His research, application and interpretation of the law is impeccable. He has a way of making complicated, convoluted issues understandable, which is a reflection of his concise and clear understanding of the law. He is extremely detail oriented, ethical and fair minded. He is familiar with the court system and its workings in this county.

Unlike many small-town attorneys, Wes also has experience in the Court of Appeals as well as the Oregon Supreme Court.

If you want a judge who will apply the law and not be swayed by bias or political pressure should you ever find yourself in court, vote for Wes.

It is the task of the court to enforce the law, not bend it to suit their personal opinions. We can count on Wes to be fair, impartial and give every case, big and small, his full consideration.

Frequently, legal positions are appointed by the governor. We have a constitutional right to elect our own judges and district attorneys, and yet often the governor appoints them for us. This concerns me as I do not feel Gov. Kate Brown has the same values as the people in our community.

We cannot be apathetic about voting because the freedoms and rural lifestyle we cherish could be endangered. I urge you not to accept Gov. Brown's appointment of Judge Mona Williams and to instead look into the experience and

qualifications of both candidates. I am sure you will find Wes is the best choice.

I am familiar with the reputation and professional quality of both candidates. in court and through various cases. Wes is the more qualified and suitable candidate. He has the rigid self-discipline and honest work ethic to follow the U.S. Constitution, Oregon Constitution, statutes and case law and to interpret them carefully and deliberately.

> Dianne Williams Elgin

Peden: We need the protection of the rule of law

To the Editor:

I currently work at Boise Cascade as an analyst programmer, and help with technical support for several local businesses. Over the last year and a half, I worked with Wes Williams and his law partner at the time, former Judge Wallace, on technical support. I have also been involved with Wes through several cases.

As a nation, we have recently seen the deep divide of partisan politics, and it is clearer than ever that we need the protection of the rule of law. It is crucial that the judiciary remain above partisan politics and not be swayed by political pressures, preserving our due process and constitutional rights. I have personally seen Wes uphold the process of law and iustice.

The majority of our judges have been government attorneys until they were elected or, more commonly, appointed by the governor. We would like to see a judge in our circuit court that has most recently served as an attorney directly for the people. The court system should serve the people, and we need a judge with experience protecting the rights and interests of the people versus the state. Wes does not work for the government. He works directly for the people in our community and I believe this uniquely qualifies him to be a public servant in our circuit court.

I have seen Wes demonstrate an impartial attitude, seeking the truth and clear demonstration of evidence. I have great confidence that Wes will serve Union County and Wallowa County with great distinction. My family and I have already voted Wes Williams for judge.

> Noel Peden Summerville

Messinger: Vote for the judge who has already been chosen

To the Editor: I would like to encourage the citizens of Union and Wallowa counties to select Mona Williams for circuit court judge.

Mona Williams applied one time and was selected by a professional group of the judiciary and legal profession to be appointed Circuit Court Judge of Union and Wallowa coun-

ties by Gov. Brown. Wes Williams has applied three times and has not been selected for appointment by a standing gover-

The application and selection process for appointing a circuit court judge is a thorough vetting of the candidates. It is a self-nomination process, completing applications, detailing one's experience and professional qualifications, submitting letters of recommendation and having formal inter-

The interviews are conducted by a committee with several lawyers with diverse backgrounds in different areas of law and governor's office representatives. After reviewing the materials and conducting interviews, the committee recommends two finalists to the governor. The final two are interviewed by the governor who makes the decision.

Mona Williams was recommended and then appointed by the governor to be our circuit court judge. It is my understanding that Wes Williams did not make the final cut to be recommended to the governor.

I believe the expressed support of Eric Valentine and Russ West, both retired senior judges, current District Attorney Kelsie Mc-Daniel and former District Attorney Tim Thompson — as well as many of the practicing attorneys and the sheriffs of both counties provides further evidence and rationale that the best person for circuit court judge is Mona Williams.

I do not have a personal connection to either of the candidates. I have met Mona Williams only once and I know Wes Williams only by sight, when I see him with his wife, Jennifer Schemm, whom I know because of her legal work for the Hells Canyon Preservation Council.

I believe the average citizen has little basis or information to aid them in selecting a circuit court judge. My recommendation is based solely on the outcome of the professional vetting process, accomplished by people who know what is required to be a successful judge. They chose Mona Williams. I am choosing her also.

> Robert Messinger Summerville

Jones: District 2 residents resent **McLeod-Skinner**

To the Editor:

I proudly support and am voting for Greg Walden. You know why? Because I resent a candidate like Jamie McLeod-Skinner who just registered to vote in our district on July 10, 2017, using her mother's Crooked River Ranch address. She is a candidate who briefly worked in Phoenix and was terminated for creating a hostile work environment.

I also resent the rent-amob McLeod-Skinner uses in her tour of each county. During the Miner's Jubilee parade lineup, her group was behind the Baker County Republicans' float. There were only one or two in her group from Baker County.

They were very hostile as we were decorating our float with American flags, Uncle Sam and other patriotic trappings. This group apparently did not think we could hear their comments. We ignored them, or tried,

Write to us

LETTERSTOTHE 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.

until one aggressively came up to our float and tried to pick a fight with a Baker City resident about Greg Walden.

I also resent this same rent-a-mob trolling Walden's Facebook pages and making nasty comments nonstop. If you research these people back, you will find they are really fake accounts, or people who do not live in CD2, Greg's district. And McLeod-Skinner is funded by out-of-state corporations and organizations according to the FEC reporting page.

These people are targeting rural Oregon counties. They want to take out our only Republican representative for a reason. Vote for Greg when you receive your ballot in the mail.

> Suzan Ellis Jones Bridgeport

Hallman: We have a

To the Editor:

Jamie McLeod-Skinner will vote to require health insurers to cover pre-existing medical conditions at an affordable rate. Walden votes against requiring coverage for pre-existing conditions.

Jamie McLeod-Skinner will vote to allow our government to negotiate lower drug prices. Walden votes not to allow that and is the largest recipient of Big Pharmaceutical political donations in the House — a coincidence?

Jamie McLeod-Skinner listens to our concerns and will represent those concerns in D.C. Walden is just showing up now that it's election time.

Please join me in voting for Jamie McLeod-Skinner.

> Mary Hallman Pendleton

McDonald: Jamie would even listen to Walden

To the Editor:

Has anyone seen my old friend, Greg Walden? I've been trying to get an urgent message to him.

Greg, remember when I invited you to come see our Oregon Ducks play at Autzen? At our 40th HRVHS reunion? That season was special, in 2014, and you missed it. After the overtime victory Oct. 13, we have new reason for optimism. The offer still stands, and I have great seats now.

Last time I saw you, at your Prineville town hall in 2016, I wanted to renew the offer, but you didn't call on me and avoided me afterward. I get it, the Ducks weren't very good, and you

didn't want to embarrass me by refusing. But now, our Ducks might be on the verge of another special season. Do you want to miss it again? How about coming with me to every game, home and away? I'm retired, you know, and I strongly recommend it. You could retire, we could become super fans, like when we were the managers for our ninth-grade football team

You'll like retirement. Those constant decisions like should I wear a power suit with soft, expensive shoes today, or what happens if I run into an Eastern Oregon constituent? Maybe the plaid shirt, sweater vest, khakis and sturdy shoes? Being a retired Oregon Duck superfan, it's easy! It's green and yellow, or black, or white when it's a road game sometimes, or carbonite. And I bet it's hard to shop for you. So easy for my family — it's Ducks stuff all the time.

I could invite your successor to a game sometime, Jamie McLeod-Skinner. She also has a degree from Oregon. When I retired, I too had an excellent replacement. It made the decision a lot easier. She's younger, energetic and is smart as a whip. And she listens, even to Republicans like me. All three of us could go together. I bet she'd even listen to vou. What do you say? I'm really looking forward to it.

> Scott McDonald Mount Vernon

Stevens: Jamie McLeod-Skinner stands for people, not profits

To the Editor:

As a Wasco county disabled Vietnam War veteran and social worker veteran counselor at the Department of Veterans Affairs, and in private practice for the last 30 years, I am voting for Jamie McLeod-Skinner. Here's why.

Representative Walden and his colleagues continue to refuse to take care of the big problem in the VA: paying the 1,400 unfilled VA doctor positions a competitive salary. We veterans need those positions filled.

An estimated 2,800,000 veterans in America live at or below poverty level, and an estimated 12 percent of homeless are veterans and depend on federal assistant programs.

Walden supports 2019 budget cuts in Medicaid, Social Security Disability Benefits, food stamps and housing assistance programs.

Walden supports dismantling coverage for pre-existing conditions. We veterans understand pre-existing

conditions. Walden accepted more than \$200,000 from pharmaceutical companies.

Walden did not show courage and raise his voice in protest for us veterans when President Trump criticized John McCain as "not a war hero," or when Trump approved the minimal two days American flags at half-staff when McCain died, or when Trump recently grabbed the American flag. The American flag is sacred. The flag is to be saluted.

Jamie McLeod-Skinner stands for people, not profits. She has visited and listened to the voices in rural Oregon. In his early years, Greg Walden worked more for us rural veterans, but now he sides with big money and less for us. I urge you to vote for Jamie.

> Michael Stevens Mosier

Mounts: Jamie McLeod-Skinner is not owned by I business

To the Editor: I am saddened to

conclude that Greg Walden has become a very poor value for the salary we pay him. He gets more money from health insurance companies, from drug manufacturers, from pharmaceutical companies and from medical device makers than any other House member. He has been corrupted by large corporate donations.

A large number of cities, counties and states are suing many of Walden's big donors for facilitating the destructive nationwide opioid abuse epidemic. This includes drug manufacturers and marketers Abbott Labs, McKesson Corp, and Johnson and Johnson. They're making huge profits at a staggering monetary and societal cost to all of us.

Now we have a wellqualified candidate in Jamie McLeod-Skinner who will bring a restored vision and dedication to the U.S. Congress on our behalf. She has experience in issues such as water, infrastructure and agriculture, and she is not owned by big business. I'm confident she'll work hard to bring us together and find solutions that work for Oregonians.

Please send new leadership to the U.S. Congress by voting for Jamie McLeod-Skinner. We need a new representative who is focused on the well-being of the people.

> Stephen Mounts, USMC veteran Tygh Valley

