OUR VIEW

Campaign changes needed

Oregon's Secretary of State is not just the state's chief records keeper, she is, by law, the chief elections official. She not only oversees elections statewide, it's up to her to see that campaign finance laws are being followed. As the current officeholder, Bev Clarno, noted recently, she believes there's a better way, and her idea is worth exploring.

Clarno would like to see enforcement of campaign finance laws moved out of her office. Doing so, she believes, would help scotch the notion that the office has a partisan bias about such things.

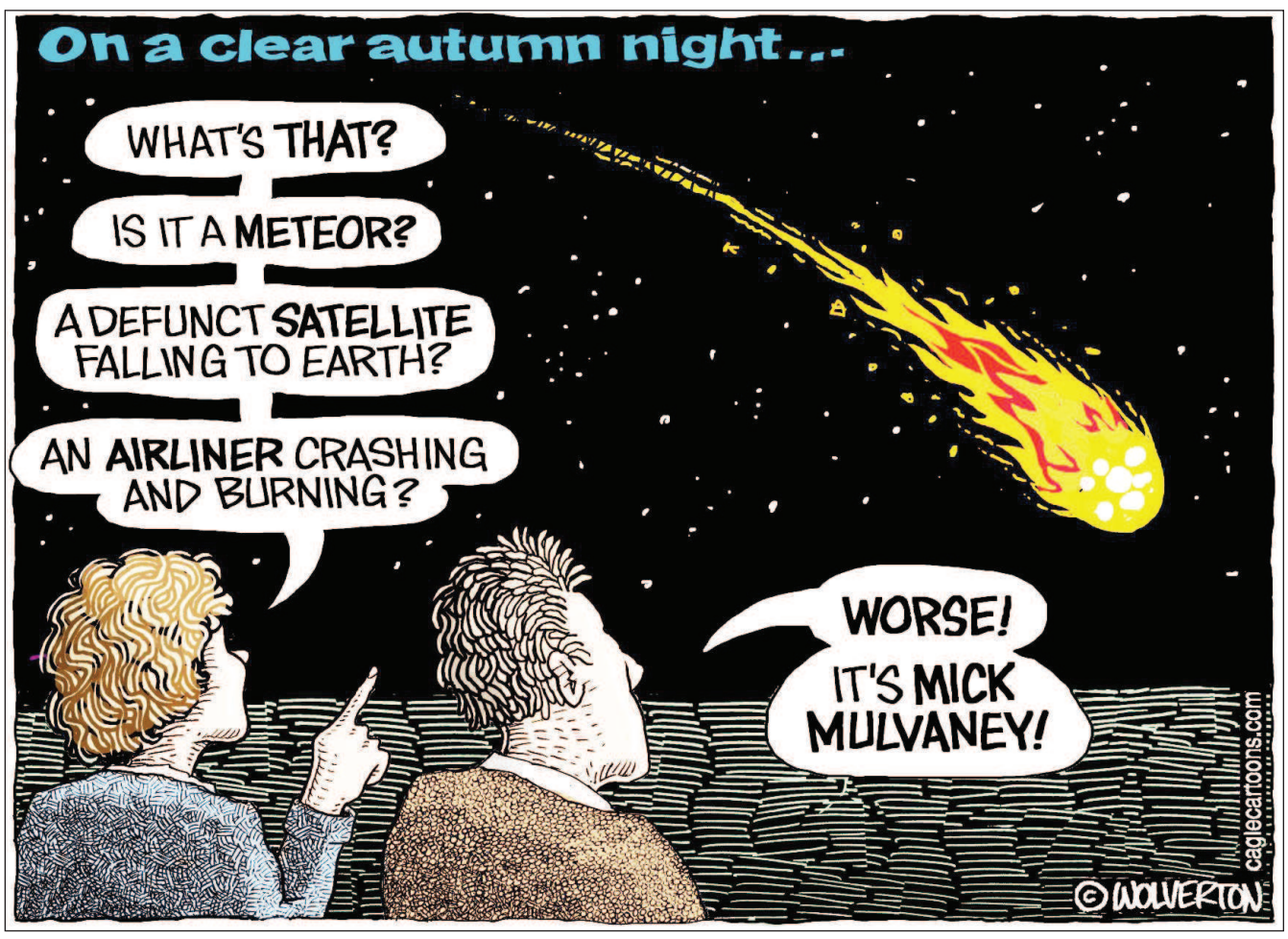
She'd send potential civil violations of the law — violations that involve such things as circulating petitions improperly — to the state Government Ethics Commission for investigation and fines, if needed.

Criminal violations, which can include things like illegally making changes to voter registration cards, and which can be felonies, would be turned over to the attorney general's office, again for investigation and prosecution, if required.

Both those agencies are better equipped to investigate potential violations than Clarno's office is, for one thing. Her office lost two elections investigators in 2011, positions that have never been replaced. Without investigators, the office has only very limited resources to look into potential violations, and as a result some violations have gone undiscovered.

More important, neither of those agencies is charged with overseeing elections, as the Secretary of State is. Moving investigation of ethical and potential criminal violations regarding campaign contributions and spending could help dispel any suggestion that bias plays a role in the Secretary of State's election oversight, and that's important.

The Secretary of State can't make such changes on her own. That's up to the Legislature. But Clarno's proposal is certainly worth exploring.



Your views

Marrs: McLeod-Skinner has experience, skills, values to be Secretary of State

To the Editor:

As we prepare for the 2020 primaries, which are only seven months away, the public was afforded a great look at the Democratic candidates for Secretary of State at the Democratic Party of Oregon Summit in Bend this weekend. The Secretary of State is the second-highest elected executive in the state of Oregon and as such deserves great attention.

While the candidate pool is strong, I have decided to support Jamie McLeod-Skinner. I support Jamie because she has the depth and breadth of experience to address all major aspects of this role: supervising elections and audits, registering businesses, managing public records and management of public lands. She also has experience managing large numbers of government employees, which will be critical in this role.

Jamie is a candidate who will keep her promises and hold true to her values even when under pressure. She can serve all Oregonians — as she demonstrated in her campaign for CD2, she will show up, she will listen to understand, and she will work together to address complex issues facing this state.

Jamie understands that we have more in common than divides us. She is the candidate for Secretary of State who has the experience and skills to do the job, and she values building community across the state.

Jamie McLeod-Skinner has my vote.

Janet Marrs
Cove

Epstein: The true definition of a "socialist"

To the Editor:

A "liberal/progressive" is not the same thing as a "socialist."

A true "socialist" is someone who wants all of the businesses and workplaces to be owned and controlled by "the state" or "the government" or "the workers" or "the people," and not by individuals and groups of people who run them for profit as we have here in the USA.

Democrats who want our federal government to spend more on social programs to help the lower and middle classes as they struggle to survive and pay their bills are not "socialists." They are "liberals/progressives" who want our market-based capitalist economic system to become more humane (and not replaced) by having our federal government spend more to help the lower and middle classes.

Let's use a little common sense here. How can someone (including Bernie Sanders, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ilhan Omar) be a true "socialist" when they do not advocate for and fight for replacing our market-based capitalist economic system with a socialist economic system?

I am a retired college professor of sociology, social work and psychology who still very much enjoys helping people as well as informing, teaching and educating others. That's why I wrote this letter.

Stewart B. Epstein
Rochester, New York

Write to us

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We all face our barriers

GLENN MOLLETTE
SYNDICATED COLUMNIST

A lot of us are faced with the impossible. We may have what seems to be impossible debts, physical illnesses, human relationships and vocational pressures.

Too often we hear someone say, "Nothing is impossible" and we nod our heads nonchalantly in an unbelieving way.

Keep in mind there is always the possibility of a breakthrough. Enough great minds working together may come up with a cure or a solution. We all have barriers that may appear difficult and even impossible.

Occasionally someone will come along who pushes the mark and proves that the human spirit and body can do more than we even dared to imagine. Such a person is Eliud Kipchoge. Recently he ran a marathon in Vienna in one hour, fifty-nine minutes and forty seconds.

In doing so, he became the first person to run a marathon in less than two hours.

Running a marathon is an amazing accomplishment and not for the faint of heart. Most people will never attempt such an endeavor nor even aspire to try. For many, jogging a couple of miles or even walking a mile or two is an accomplishment. The idea of running a mile in less than six minutes is certainly for the physically fit but what about running a mile in 4:34 minutes?

Who could ever imagine running 26.2 miles at an average of 4.34 minutes per mile? This is exactly what Kipchoge did in Vienna on October 12 in the unofficial Vienna run. The world record 34-year-old runner from Kenya is already a marathon record holder. In 2018, he set the world record in the Berlin marathon running 2:01:39. He also won the Olympic marathon in 2016 in Rio de Janeiro.

The feat will not go on the record books as an official world record because it wasn't an open competition. Also, Kipchoge was assisted by a team of rotating world class runners who ran in front and alongside him in V formation as he ran an average speed of 13.6 mph. If you are physically fit, you might try running on a treadmill at 13.6 mph for a couple of minutes to get an idea of how that pace feels.

To prepare for the event organized by chemical company Ineos and sponsored by Nike, Kipchoge was reported to average running 140 miles per week at a high altitude.

Setting a world record is probably not on your radar for today. What about finding a job, losing 10 pounds or getting your life in order? Completing this week or just this day may be your marathon and you are aren't sure how it's going to work out. Often our greatest accomplishment for the day is making a decision, a change or showing up. Kipchoge obviously had a goal, worked hard and organized his life to achieve it. Keep in mind it's possible. You can do it. With God, hard work, with help, in some way, by some miracle, it's possible.

Don't give up.

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Phone:
541-963-3161
Toll free (Oregon):
1-800-422-3110
Fax: 541-963-7804
Email:
news@lagrandeobserver.com
Website:
www.lagrandeobserver.com
Street address:
1406 Fifth St., La Grande

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