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INSIDE

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Growth could spur primary changes

Rise in nonaffiliated voters encourages push to open Oregon primaries

By JULIA SHUMWAY
Oregon Capital Chronicle

SALEM — Oregon voters who aren't registered with any political party reached a significant milestone in March: They now outnumber Democrats.

Nonaffiliated voters have long been the second largest bloc in the state, behind Democrats and ahead of Republicans. Their continued growth, due in part to a 2015 law that automatically registered people getting or renewing driver's licenses as nonaffiliated voters, could give them more political power.

But they don't get a say in picking candidates in most primary elections.

When county clerks mail ballots in May, nonaffiliated voters will see one major statewide race for the nonpartisan commissioner of the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries, some state and local judges and possibly other local races, depending on where they live. They won't get to vote on nominees for Congress, governor or the Oregon Legislature.

Nonaffiliated voters have until April 26 to change their party registration and become eligible to vote in the Democratic or Republican primary. They can switch their registration back after that.

News that nonaffiliated voters surpassed registered Democrats brought more attention to a pending attempt to change the Oregon Constitution to allow all voters to participate in state-funded primary elections. Ed Doyle, president of Oregon Open Primaries and the chief petitioner for the proposed constitutional amendment, said he's been a registered voter with both major parties at different points in his life and was always frustrated by how primaries limited his choices.

"I've always kind of been bothered by the fact that I was limited," he said. "I've always voted for the person, not the party, and very frequently I was limited on who I could choose."

Doyle and other petitioners gathered more than 1,000 signatures from Oregon voters, the first step in getting a proposed amendment on the ballot. They're now reviewing a draft ballot title from the Oregon Justice Department, and once that ballot title is complete, they must collect nearly 150,000 signatures from Oregon voters by July 8 for the measure to appear on the November ballot.

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LOCAL RECOGNITION



Lisa Goss/Contributed Photo

« Bob Goss, left, sits with other members and family of the La Grande and Baker American Legion posts in Baker City in November 1948. Goss and the La Grande Post's drum corps marched in an Armistice Day parade in Baker City before a football game between La Grande and Baker high schools. In 2022, Goss donated the uniform he wore in this photograph to be preserved by the American Legion Post 43 in La Grande.

TOP HONORS

Bob Goss, World War II veteran, earns American Legion award

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

LA GRANDE — No other La Grande resident can say they have been a member of the American Legion longer than Robert "Bob" Goss.

The 97-year-old was recently recognized by the national branch of the American Legion for 75 continuous years of membership in good standing.

"We'll likely never give one of those out again," La Grande American Legion Post 43 Commander Dave Matott said. "It's not something we've ever done here, national sent this to us. It's a great achievement."

A World War II veteran, Goss formally received the honor at the La Grande Post on Wednesday, March 9.

The American Legion, a nonprofit organization that supports veterans and current military personnel, was founded just 28 years before Goss joined in 1947. Goss is the oldest member of the La Grande Post 43 and the only local resident to receive such an award.

During his many years as a member, Goss was actively involved in the post's drum and bugle corps. The band members were honored as state champions

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Goss

Dale Case added to Diamond Pioneer Agricultural registry

By DICK MASON
The Observer

ALICEL — Dale Case, an Alicel-area farmer and agricultural leader, is joining a select circle.

Case, 80, is being saluted for a lifetime of achievements by Oregon State University's College of Agricultural Sciences, which has named him to its Diamond Pioneer Agricultural Achievement Registry.

"It was a big surprise," Case said of his selection. "It was totally unexpected."

He added that it is gratifying that some of the work he has done is being remembered.

"It is nice to be recognized," Case said.

Case received an award commemorating his selection to the registry on Tuesday, April 19, at a ceremony at OSU in Corvallis. He was nominated for the registry by the Columbia Basin Agricultural Research Center in Adams.

"Dale has a long history of service to Oregon's and the region's agriculture," the Columbia Basin Agricultural Research Center said in a press release.

John Howard, a La Grande businessman, noted

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Case

Poll: Oregonians willing to spend on family services

By ZACK DEMARS
The Bulletin

SALEM — Child and family wellness programs are widely supported in Oregon, according to a new survey from the Oregon Values & Beliefs Center.

Surveyors asked 1,500 Oregon residents their opinions on a dozen different social programs benefiting children, from affordable housing to food access, and whether they would support their tax money going to those programs. They found that many would, despite differences in preferred programs on political and demographic lines.

Three of the most popular pro-

MORE INFORMATION

The Oregon Values and Beliefs Center is committed to the highest level of public opinion research. To help obtain that, the nonprofit is building a large research panel of Oregonians to ensure that all voices are represented in discussions of public policy in a valid and statistically reliable way. Selected panelists earn points for their participation, which can be redeemed for cash or donated to a charity. To learn more visit oregonvbc.org/about-the-panel.

grams respondents supported included tutoring for students who need extra support, increasing access to extracurricular activities and a state program offering health care to eligible children. Upwards

of 85% of those who responded to the survey said they supported those programs.

Survey takers felt less positive about using culturally inclusive learning materials, cultural awareness and implicit bias trainings for school staff and oral health care offered at schools — though 70% or more of respondents still supported those programs.

Political affiliation is a key factor in determining a person's support for those programs, researchers found.

About 91% of Democrats who took the survey supported using tax dollars to increase access to affordable housing, while just 64% of Republicans supported

the same thing.

The two groups face the widest gap in beliefs on the question of using tax dollars to use "culturally inclusive" learning materials. Among Democrats, 89% expressed support, while just 40% of Republicans did the same. The two groups felt similarly about requiring cultural awareness and implicit bias training for school staff.

Noah Scott Warman, 52, a labor attorney and progressive Democrat from Portland, was one of the survey's respondents. He said that while he agrees that diversity, equity and inclusion are important

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WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section

	Tonight		Friday
	33 LOW		56/37
	Mostly cloudy		Still cloudy

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