

OUR VIEW

# Sen. Wyden committed to representing all

Oregon U.S. Sen Ron Wyden isn't going to collect a huge majority of votes from the Eastern Oregon counties he represents because of his party affiliation, but his continued focus on sponsoring town hall sessions in even the most conservative areas of the state show he is committed to democracy.

Wyden was in La Grande last month for a town hall meeting where he discussed a range of issues, including the lack of affordable housing and homelessness across the state.

Eastern Oregon is a deeply conservative area and the majority of its voters subscribe to Republican values. Wyden, a Democrat, visits this section of the state on a regular basis for town halls and other information-gathering exercises.

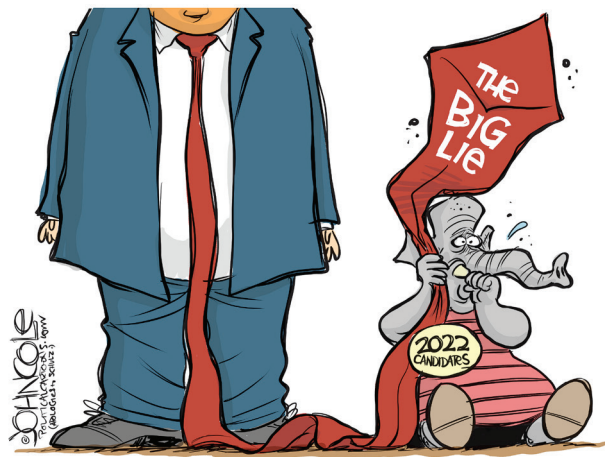
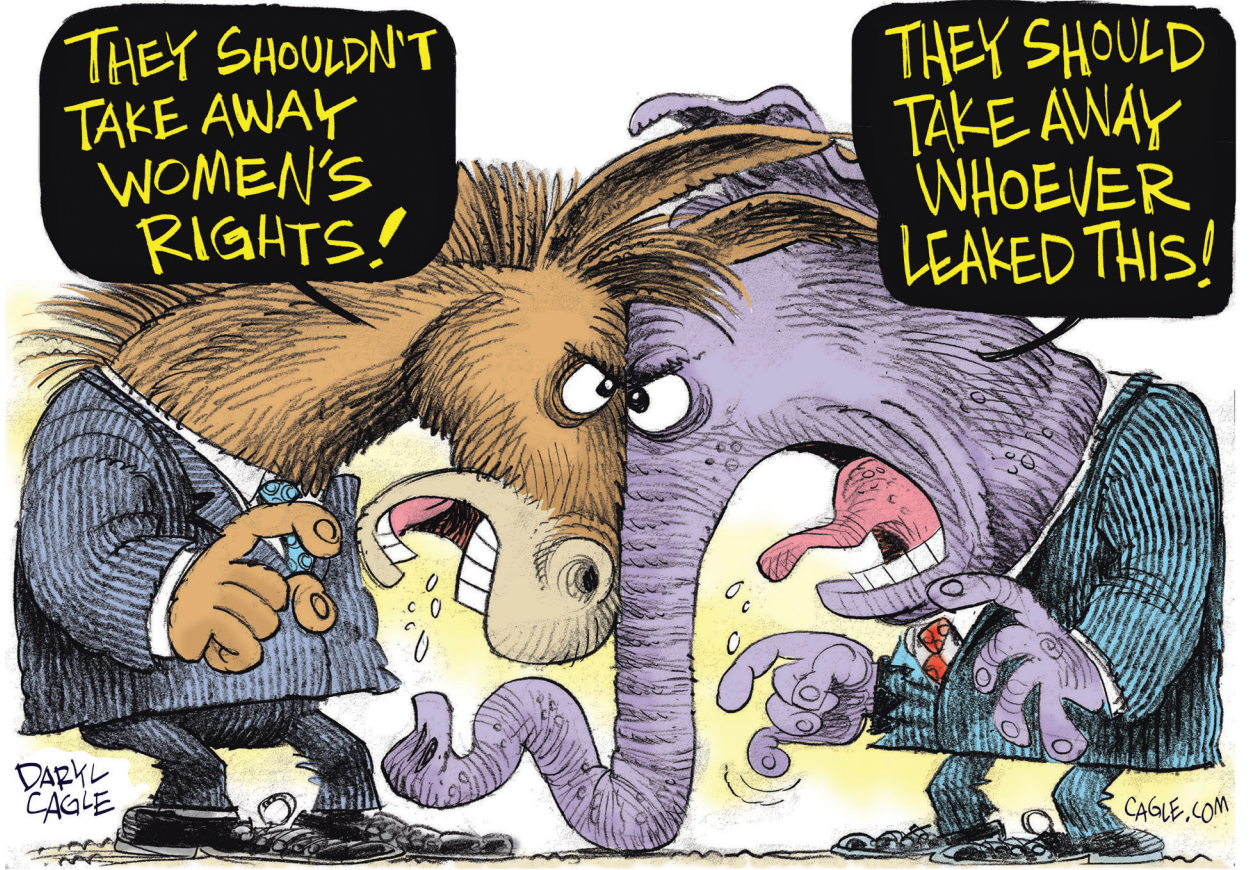
Wyden has repeatedly stated he represents all of Oregon, not just the voting block that elected him. That should be good news for voters.

Wyden and his Senate Democratic colleague Sen. Jeff Merkley both spend a lot of time in areas where their brand of politics probably isn't very popular, and they do it because they view their job as one that encompasses all residents, not just the ones who adhere to their own political views.

The nation needs more of that kind of political outlook. At the end of the day, whatever an individual's political persuasion, the issues in Enterprise, La Grande or Pendleton are the issues faced by all Eastern Oregon residents. Whether a senator is a Republican or a Democrat doesn't really matter when viewed against issues such as the availability of water or other natural resource challenges. No, what matters is whether our elected representatives — be it at the state or federal level — get things done.

The nation has become a polarized entity politically where a commitment to blind dogma is pushed across all political spectrums. Our issues — the problems we face at the local, state and federal level — demand more than just a business-as-usual, narrow political view. Instead, we must face each problem from a holistic point of view and seek solutions that cover a broad spectrum of ideologies.

Wyden's visits are a testament to a lawmaker that cares about all Oregonians. You might not agree with his politics, but his commitment to traveling to areas such as Eastern Oregon to gather input is a good sign democracy is vibrant in our corner of the Republic.



OTHER VIEWS

## Anderes has proven to be fair-minded champion of Union County

As business owners involved in agriculture, we support Paul Anderes in his reelection for Union County Commissioner. Paul's commitment to serving all of Union County has not wavered, guiding the county through the challenges of COVID-19 and advocating for safety measures that balanced public safety with local control and personal rights of citizens.

Paul's work on the improvements for wildland firefighting capacity at the Union County Airport will benefit the entire region and help make it a better facility to base operations, protecting our communities and forests.

His support of the MERA management plan affirms the county's commitment to its constituents that it will be managed as it was intended when passed by voters: a managed forest that supports recreational opportunities for the region. His involvement with the Blue Mountain Forest plan ensures that local citizens who use and enjoy our forests have a say in their management.

In his time as commissioner, Paul has proven to be a fair-minded champion of our county and its citizens.

Wade and Ange Bingaman Imbler

## Anderes has sincere desire to help small businesses and citizens

I am writing this letter as an endorsement for the reelection of Paul Anderes as Union County Commissioner.

I became directly acquainted with Paul during his previous term as county commissioner after the Union County Search and Rescue unit, in which I am a volunteer member, was asked to help on the COVID Incident Command Team. That team was started at the very

beginning of the pandemic over two years ago. During the many months the command team was operational I had an occasion to work with all the commissioners as logistics officer, setting up drive-thru testing, drive-thru clinics, all associated with the COVID pandemic. Commissioner Anderes was always on top of things making sure our team had the tools necessary to operate effectively.

During the pandemic I could see Paul had a sincere concern and desire to help the small businesses and the citizens of Union County who were being financially and personally affected by COVID.

There have been other times through the years that our volunteer SAR unit has worked with Paul and the other commissioners on different projects where our manpower was needed. Paul has always been supportive of our volunteers and their efforts.

I wholeheartedly endorse Paul Anderes to his reelection to the Union County Board of Commissioners.

Fred Hawkins Union

## New school district facility would be a gift to youth and community

The La Grande School District is in a unique, rare situation. When interest rates recently dropped, the district took advantage of the opportunity to refinance the bond passed by voters in 2014. That refinance lessened the repayment amount by more than \$4 million and did not extend the life of the bond. Additionally, La Grande School District applied for, and was awarded, a capital improvement grant of \$4 million. That grant can only be utilized if matched by district funds. LGSD is now in the position to reinvest the savings of the refinance. If we don't take advantage of this great opportunity now, we may never see the opportunity again.

When taxpayers passed the bond in 2014, La Grande School District

ENDORSEMENTS

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was able to make many upgrades and additions to existing schools and was even able to build the beautiful new Central Elementary School. With all that being done, there wasn't enough money left to consider what needed to be done with the two oldest buildings in the district. The Annex and maintenance buildings are old and need to be replaced. That's all there is to it. The cost of repairs would far outweigh the cost of replacement.

The Annex has served the community of La Grande for almost 100 years. If we vote to pass bond measure 31-105, a new multipurpose facility can serve our community for 100 more. What better gift can we give our youth and community, and at no added cost to us at all?

The community of La Grande needs to realize that the Annex is not ADA accessible. Our youth deserve to have a multipurpose academic/athletic facility that provides access to everyone, and we have the opportunity to give that to them. I strongly encourage you to educate yourself. Visit [www.citizensforschoolrenovations.com](http://www.citizensforschoolrenovations.com).

This really isn't about La Grande School District and how they responded to mask mandates or how they've decided to allocate funds. This is about our youth and the community of La Grande. The time is now. Let's pull together and give our community what it deserves. Please join me in voting yes for Bond Measure 31-105.

Dena Tams Island City

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