

OUR VIEW

Take time to fill out ballot

Midterm elections have a habit of collecting less than stellar results in terms of voter turnout, but we hope this year residents make becoming involved in their democracy a priority.

This year's election is of course on Tuesday, May 17, and many have probably already cast their ballots in the local and state elections.

Elections, especially off-year elections, tend to be regulated to a kind of weird purgatory where there is a sense they don't matter as much as a year when American voters choose a president.

Yet, every election matters.

That's because our system of government

functions well when an array of different mechanisms work in concert. One of those mechanisms is the press. There must be an active, free press that functions to hold elected leaders and others accountable. Another mechanism is interaction between voters and elected officials. Voters need to be able to talk to and, at times, even debate with their elected representatives.

Voting and elections represent one of the key pillars of our democracy. When we, as a nation, do not exercise our right to vote we are short-changing democracy and sending a subtle message of indifference.

Democracy can't function inside a pool of indifference.

Granted, the May primary doesn't have — at least on the surface — any flashpoint, controversial issues. Oregon's primary is a closed one, which means voters must choose along party lines. So, in a sense, choices may seem limited but they are in reality not so.

Every citizen of the nation, state and county carries a sacred obligation to cast a ballot. That privilege — and make no mistake, it is a privilege — isn't some obscure, pie-in-the-sky type of concept. Our right to vote is the single key element to our democracy, and a down payment on that right has been put down by millions of men and women of our armed forces over our 200-plus-year history.

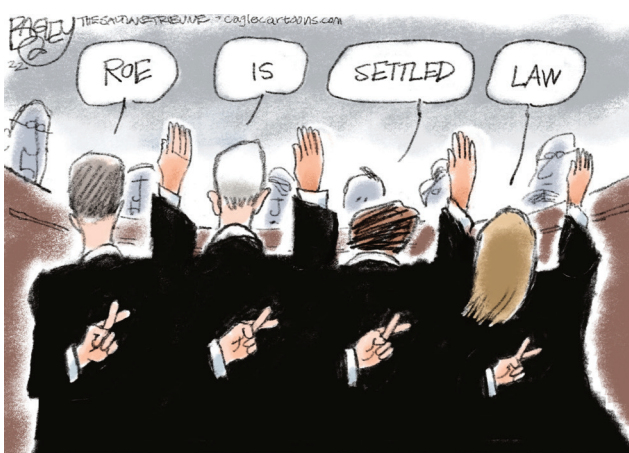
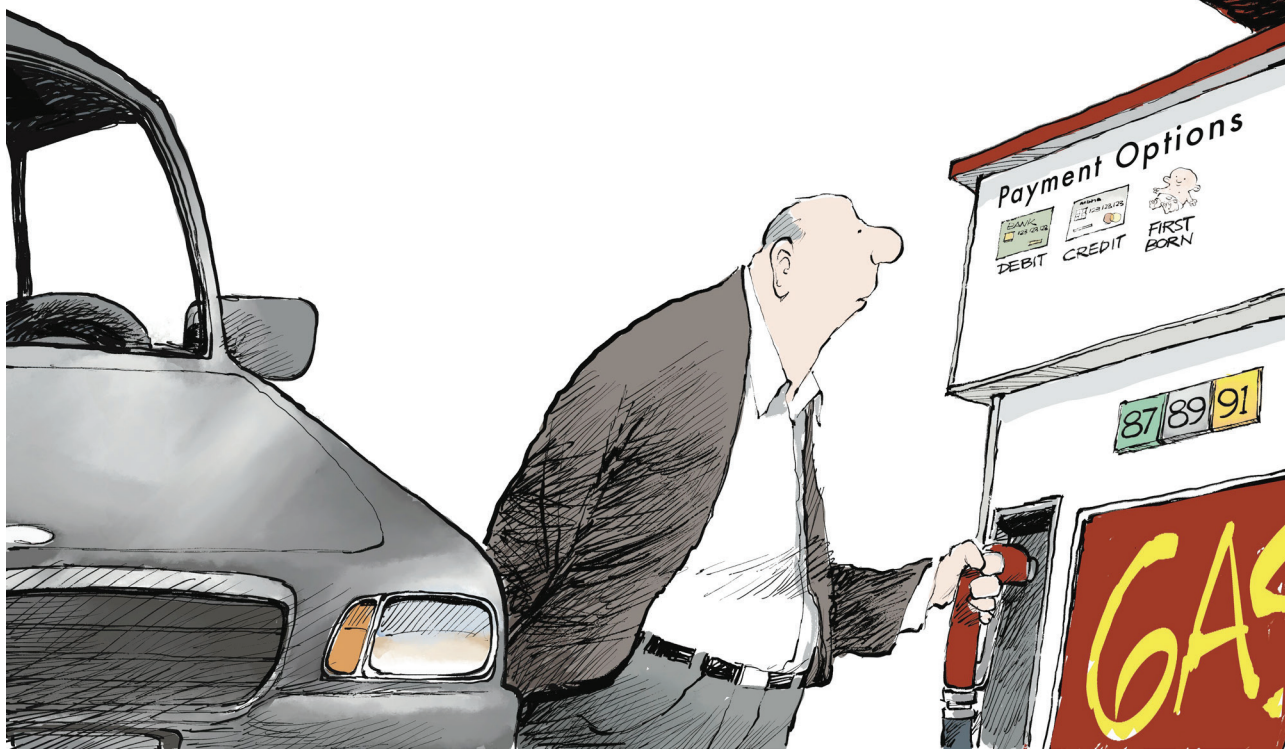
If you haven't yet cast your vote, dig out that ballot and spend a few moments going over the selections and then take the ballot to a drop-off box in your town. Oregon has made voting extremely easy, and there's no excuse for passing up the opportunity to participate in our system of government.

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OTHER VIEWS

Anderes does not toot his own horn

I am writing this letter in support of Paul Anderes who is one of Union County's current commissioners. I can tell you from my experience any decision made will never please 100% of those involved. We must look at the objectives in mind and make choices that will help us reach them.

The work that has been done on MERA was done to proactively prevent possible fire issues. La Grande experienced one of those in the early 1970s. Thankfully it was not to the extent of the recent Southern Oregon and Detroit Lake fires. Initially our MERA property shows the effect of the machines used to create the safety zone, but like other fire buffer zones established, in time it will not look as it does right now. The contractor who is still under contract will return and make changes when weather and soil conditions permit.

Paul Anderes is the point person on our county's forestry issues because of his experience in forestry including education (OSU), personal working with his family in logging and forest management, a wildland firefighter as both a contract agent and for the Federal Forest Service, as well as an instructor training our youth to receive certification to work on the fire lines.

Paul Anderes probably did not take band in his educational career as he does not toot his own horn. Ask someone from our county food bank what Paul has done. Paul worked to assist our schools to return to in-person learning for our children. As superintendent of the Imbler School District I saw firsthand that we were able to return to field trips, local, state and national competitions in both FFA and FBLA, athletics and other activities through his efforts.

I trust Paul to do what is best for our children, our local employment, our businesses and all of our com-

munity members. He has the experience, education and knowledge to go to the source to assist each of us. Please remember to turn in your ballot and choose what you believe to best for the next four years. I strongly urge you to consider Paul Anderes.

Doug Hislop
La Grande

Dedication, skills and compassion make Anderes a 'great' commissioner

Being private agricultural landowners in Union County, we highly recommend the reelection of Paul Anderes to his current position on the Union County Board of Commissioners.

Good candidates are hard to come by and "great" candidates are ones to keep in their position. We recognize Paul Anderes as the latter! We have been personally involved with Paul for 25-plus years and professionally involved throughout his first term as commissioner.

Commissioner Anderes has many excellent qualifications that enhance his performance in this office. First of all, he is dedicated to his job. If he doesn't have a good understanding of a situation, we've seen him research and find the answers needed to move forward. He has a wide range of skills such as good communication skills, excellent presentation skills and compassion for the community he serves. His years as an educator have greatly enhanced his ability to serve us all. Paul is thorough and doesn't leave situations undone. Striving to investigate and secure full knowledge of the issues brought before him are qualities that have helped create a well-rounded team of commissioners in Union County.

Personally, Commissioner Andres has gone the distance with the concerns of elk damage in Union County. We observed his skill in making a presentation in Salem, Oregon, regarding

this problem. We confirm that his performance there demonstrated his ability to prepare and deliver a strong case in trying to influence and make others understand a situation. He is a talented speaker and advocate for all of Union County.

We encourage you to make Paul Anderes your choice for Union County Commissioner. He is without reservation our choice.

Bill and Donna Tsiatsos
La Grande

Vote for candidates who understand pressing need to get to 'carbon zero'

This morning, I read about oil companies taking advantage of the global problems created by Russia's attack on Ukraine to make unimaginably huge profits in the past month. Of course, their industry windfall is causing the rest of us to suffer financially, as prices for everything else are currently tied to the cost of transportation. As our gas prices rise, so does the cost of food and other essentials.

Won't it be a more wonderful world after we transition away from fossil fuels? Depending on wind, solar, hydro, geothermal, wave and tidal energy and other renewables will allow every community in the world to locally source their power, and cut the tether to the price of oil.

As we reach for the voters guide and cast our ballots, I encourage everyone to join me in voting for candidates who understand the pressing need to get to "carbon zero." Not only will we be saving what is left of the stability of Earth's climate, but we'll be bringing local control to our essential energy infrastructure, cutting the ties that bind us to oil company policies and prices.

Kay Firor
Cove

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