

Oregon's next governor will have a big say in abortion rights

By LAUREN DAKE

Oregon Public Broadcasting

SALEM — Across the country, the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to overturn the constitutional right to an abortion has reshaped contests for governor, raising the stakes for a role that could serve as the last line of defense in protecting a pregnant person's right to choose.

But in Oregon, after *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, advocates and politicians hailed the state as a sanctuary for those seeking access to an abortion. Oregon has some of the strongest protections in the country and politicians promised it would continue to be a safe haven for those who come from more restrictive states.

Those on the front line of the battle to retain access to abortion warn, however, that Oregon is not immune to the political shifts that caused the downfall of *Roe v. Wade*.

"There is absolutely a sense of complacency in our state that the fact that abortion is legal and it will remain legal," said Grayson Dempsey, who has worked in the reproductive rights arena for years. "It would be silly to think five hours to the east they are passing laws to imprison abortion doctors and passing bans at six weeks, and we're totally fine because we have this state line."

This November is expected to be a red wave year across the country, and Oregon's next governor could have a consequential influence on the future of abor-

tion care in the state. Of the three major candidates, two favor unrestricted access to abortion. One, the Republican, called Oregon's current abortion laws "among the most extreme in the country."

Depending on which woman wins the job, future conversations about abortion rights — and other privacy-related issues — could look very different in the state.

Abortion, and related questions

It's not simply a matter of whether a candidate is for or against access to abortion services.

The next governor will be instrumental in determining how much state money is invested in reproductive health care. The governor holds the power to both propose and veto budgets, which in Oregon have often carved out money for reproductive rights. Gov. Kate Brown, who cannot run again due to term limits, has also been supportive of using taxpayer dollars, part of a \$15 million health equity fund, to help people from other states get an abortion in Oregon.

Former state Sen. Betsy Johnson, who is running as an unaffiliated candidate, has a long record of supporting abortion access. Still, she does not support using Oregon tax dollars to help people from other states access an abortion.

"Oregon tax dollars should be spent on Oregonians," said Johnson, a former chair of the legislative budget-writing committee.

The Republican candidate for governor, former House Minority Leader Christine Drazan, said she opposes using state money to help people access an abortion, no matter if it's a resident of Oregon or another state.

Former House Speaker Tina Kotek, the Democratic contender, said she supports continuing the current policy of using Oregon state funds to help people from more restrictive states access an abortion



Kristyna Wentz-Graff/Oregon Public Broadcasting, File
Chloe Latuvnik, 13, of Kenosha, Wisconsin, right, chants with her mothers, Joy and Marianne Latuvnik-Morin, left and center, as they attend a rally in downtown Portland to protest the U.S. Supreme Court overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, Friday, June 24, 2022.

here. Kotek said Oregon has long been a leader in the reproductive rights arena and she would further that legacy.

The governor also sets the tone on topics such as abortion.

After justices officially struck down *Roe v. Wade*, Gov. Brown announced she was creating a "West Coast offense" with the governors of Washington and California. The idea: to make the Democrat-controlled West Coast a safe haven for people in other states seeking an abortion.

Brown has also made it clear, as some other states move to criminalize abortions, that she will not direct state law enforcement to help extradite any individual who comes to Oregon to receive an abortion.

In 2017, Oregon lawmakers codified the right to access an abortion into state law. Like any law, it could be undone, changed or chipped away at by adding barriers that limit access.

Christel Allen, executive director with ProChoice Oregon, said advocates are always working behind the scenes to stop efforts to restrict access.

"I think folks might not recognize the amount of vigilance that organizations and advocates have been working on for the past 45 years," Allen said. "We have a dozen abortion bans introduced every (legislative) session."

Most never receive a legislative hearing.

"That's because we have (Democratic) majorities, and it's been a moment since we have had a Republican or anti-choice governor," Allen said.

More fights to come

When Lois Anderson, executive director of Oregon Right to Life, heard the U.S. Supreme Court ruling, her reaction was one of joy, she told OPB's "Think Out Loud." Anderson said her group is working on a bill for the 2023 legislative session to ban abortions later in pregnancy.

And, she noted, "There is no right to abortion in the constitution."

On this point, too, the three candidates could chart vastly different paths. Both Kotek and Johnson said they support the idea of enshrining

the right to access an abortion in the state constitution.

OPB asked Drazan whether she would support a constitutional effort to enshrine the right to abortion and other civil rights. She declined to answer and instead offered a statement from her spokesperson: "Our campaign is focused on addressing high gas prices, homelessness, crime, and our failing schools. Christine has never shied away from her pro-life values and her affirmation of marriage equality is well established."

Drazan's statement makes sense politically. For Republicans, it's politically smarter to focus on the array of other pressing issues on which Democrats might seem more vulnerable to voters: the economy, a spike in gas prices, public safety and crime.

But for Democrats, it's advantageous to argue civil liberties are on the ballot and to mobilize voters who fear more rights being rolled back.

John Horvick, with the polling firm DHM Research, said surveys generally show abortion rights continue to rank lower on the scale of importance to voters than some of the economic issues. After a major news event, such as the SCOTUS decision, there is some fluctuation in voter concerns, but it's often fleeting, Horvick said.

After justices officially struck down *Roe v. Wade*, Oregon politicians tweeted and sent out press releases. There were large, but limited, public protests. Someone hurled a Molotov cocktail at the Oregon Right to Life building.

But overall, the debate over personal freedom in the hotly contested governor's race has remained relatively muted.

With about four months to go before the election, however, that could change. Despite what stance they take, both sides agree the Supreme Court ruling was just one step in an ongoing battle.

Researchers studying extreme NW weather

By JOE RAINERI

KGW News

PORTLAND — Over the last couple of years, the Pacific Northwest has seen an increasing number of extreme weather events.

From the megafires in 2020 to the hottest temperature ever recorded at Portland International Airport last summer — a high of 116 degrees on June 28, 2021.

Researchers with Portland State University and Washington State University Vancouver are looking into the factors that cause those extremes, including a weather pattern called an atmospheric ridge.

Paul Loikith is an associate professor of geography and the director of Portland

State University's Climate Science Lab. He has teamed up with Deepti Singh, an assistant professor for the School of the Environment at Washington State University Vancouver. Together, they are studying atmospheric ridge patterns and the impact they have on our weather.

Atmospheric ridges, or high-pressure systems, bring in calmer weather and are associated with drier and sunny conditions. They can also be responsible for heat waves during the summer months.

Loikith said they are using a combination of historical data going back to the late 1970s and computer models to better understand the reason behind some of the strong ridges.

Male juvenile fatally shot in parking lot at Baker Technical Institute

Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — A male juvenile was shot and killed in the parking lot at the Baker Technical Institute, on the Baker High School campus, early on Wednesday, July 13, and another male juvenile has been arrested in connection with the shooting.

The shooting was reported at 12:25 a.m., according to a press release from the Baker County Sheriff's Office. The caller told a dispatcher that the shooting suspect had fled.

Baker City Police officers responded and found a male juvenile with a gunshot wound. Efforts to save the victim were not successful.

Police also found a female juvenile at the scene who was not hurt.

Police did not release the names or ages of any of the juveniles involved.

Greg Baxter, Baker County district attorney, said the suspect was being taken to a juvenile detention facility in The Dalles.

Baker Technical Institute

is at the northwest corner of the BHS campus, north of the gymnasium.

The Major Crime Team, which includes representatives from the Baker City Police Department, Baker County Sheriff's Office and Oregon State Police, is investigating.

Employees from the Oregon State Police crime lab worked throughout the early morning hours to collect evidence and process the scene.

There is no danger to the public at this time, according to the press release.

The Baker School District sent out a notice, stating, "Activities scheduled on the main High School campus will continue. Please use the main entry of the building. Any activity scheduled in the BTI wing is canceled until further notice."

The district also stated in a press release that "those who could use emotional support at this time are encouraged to reach out to Karly Denton at the District Office: 541-524-2260."

People with HIV are our neighbors.

More than half of Oregonians with HIV live outside Portland, often in suburbs or small towns like this one.

But with today's advances, HIV isn't what it used to be. People with HIV are living longer, healthier lives, with the help of medication. By talking about HIV, we can support our community. Testing and early treatment protect you and your partner. Help is available if you're HIV+.

Learn more and find free testing at endhivoregon.org

