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just out's
ENDORSEMENTS

In this, our political issue, *Just Out* focuses on several candidates who deserve special attention. We spotlight Mary Wendy Roberts, because Rena Cusma has been running an especially hateful campaign against her, and we wanted to refresh your memory about what Roberts has done for the sexual minority community.

In the Multnomah County sheriff's race, candidate Vera Pool is profiled because she's a newcomer to politics. We worried that if you didn't meet her, you might accidentally vote for Bob Skipper because of name familiarity. (Just kidding, we know you know better than that.)

The race between Earl Blumenauer and Fred Neal had us pulling our hair out. We were curious to know why Neal chose to run against Blumenauer, who is a staunch supporter of our community. This race left us with one of the most difficult endorsement choices to make since Norma Paulus ran against Neil Goldschmidt for governor in 1986.

LONGTIME CHAMPION OF CIVIL RIGHTS

Mary Wendy Roberts is seeking her fifth term as commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries, the office that oversees the implementation of civil rights protections for workers. A longtime champion of civil rights for all people, Roberts won the Right to Privacy's Lucille Hart Award in 1993, along with her father, former state Sen. Frank Roberts, and his wife, Gov. Barbara Roberts, to honor her work on behalf of sexual minorities.

Roberts has a long history of supporting the rights of gay men and lesbians. As a state representative in 1973, she co-sponsored the first bill to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. She has co-sponsored or supported every anti-discrimination bill in Oregon since.

Last legislative session, Roberts sponsored Senate Bill 34, which would have protected gay men, lesbians and bisexuals from discrimination.

She traveled around the state, giving speeches in support of the bill and visiting the editorial boards of local newspapers. As a result of Roberts' efforts, nearly every major newspaper solidly supported the bill.

The Republican-controlled House, however, did not. The bill passed the Senate and was mired in a House committee. As a compromise, the House passed a bill that blocks the effect of community measures denying equal rights. Roberts sees Senate Bill 34—which she believes would have passed if it had been put to a House vote—as one step closer to equal protection for sexual minorities.

Roberts believes efforts by the Oregon Citizens Alliance to derail civil rights protection will backfire. "The OCA's efforts have done more to make people pay attention to the civil rights issue than anything," she said. "Before, people didn't think this had a thing to do with them. Now they recognize that they have to stand up and be counted."



Mary Wendy Roberts

Just Out endorses Mary Wendy Roberts for commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industry. She works hard for our community, and for Oregon, and she deserves the chance to continue that work.

A CHANGE IS DUE

Vera Pool, candidate for Multnomah County sheriff, has 23 years of experience in the criminal justice system. From 1988 to 1993, she was facility commander at the Multnomah County Restitution Center, which helps criminals re-enter the community as employed, responsible citizens. Before that, she served for five years as a shift commander at the Multnomah County Detention Center, where she was responsible for 520 inmates. Along with her experience in the criminal justice system, she has earned a master's in education.

Vera Pool plans on using her experience in corrections to implement the changes that are coming up in the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office. Come July 1, a section of the county up to 181st Street will be annexed into the Portland city limits. Pool feels that the Portland Police Bureau should be responsible for patrolling that area, leaving the county to take care of correctional programs for criminals. "I plan to focus on correction and prevention programs, such as hate crime prevention and intervention programs for young people so that we can divert their criminal behavior," she said. She estimates that by allowing the Portland Police to assume patrol and law enforcement duties in that area the county would save \$7 million in the first four years. She hopes to work out a contract program with Portland or other municipalities in Multnomah County, such as Gresham or Troutdale, for the unincorporated areas of the county.

By focusing on corrections, Pool says, the county would be better able to stop crime. "[We] can implement programs to keep people out of jail, if we can direct people in the right direction when the offender commits the first crime. I believe that first offenders should have some kind of consequences, but not always negative," she said. She favors having people who commit crimes to perform community service to repay victims for pain and suffering, for example, rather than throwing them in jail.

Pool supports the equal treatment of all people and denounces discrimination on all levels. "Once I become sheriff in Multnomah County, you will see a diversity of people in the department," she said. "I am a person who believes in equal justice for all. I believe the same kind of rules or laws should be applied to everyone regardless of their race or sexual orientation.... I know what it means to be discriminated against, and I would never do that to anyone because I know the pain and suffering it brings."



Vera Pool

Pool's plan for restructuring law enforcement coincides with Multnomah County Chairwoman Beverly Stein's plan for the county and with Portland Police Chief Charles Moose's plan for the Portland Police Bureau. Vera Pool is the best choice for Multnomah County sheriff. Incumbent Bob Skipper should just put down his gun and surrender.

WE TRIED BUT WE JUST COULDN'T DO IT

It's impossible to miss the plethora of yellow and blue lawn signs, bus benches and buttons that have overtaken Portland during Fred Neal's campaign for Portland City Commissioner. Neal's highly visible campaign may be indicative of his personal style: energetic, up front and outspoken in his opinions and criticisms.

Neal is challenging incumbent Earl Blumenauer for his seat on the City Council. He is frank about why he chose to run against Blumenauer rather than Gretchen Kafoury, who is also running on the May ballot. Beside the fact that Kafoury is a personal friend of his, he says he is dissatisfied with Blumenauer's vision and personality. "I find Commissioner Blumenauer's vision of this city to be incompatible with mine," he said. "It's short-sighted, it buys into the expedient quick-fix, rather than the long-range investment in the future."

If elected, Fred Neal would be the first openly gay man to serve on the Portland City Council, and the first person to serve who is open about his HIV-positive status. He has garnered support from the gay, lesbian and bisexual community. The Right to Privacy, for example, endorsed both Blumenauer and Neal, but gave Neal \$2,500—one of the highest contributions it gave to any candidate in the May primary.

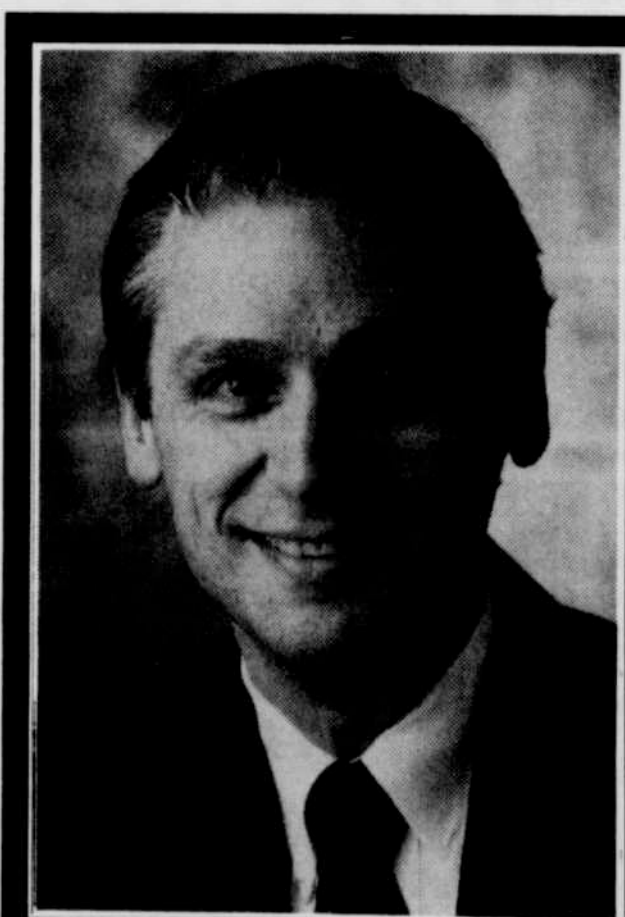
In fact, Neal served on the RTP board of directors for four years and recently served as co-chair. He has served for seven years on the board of the Oregon chapter of the American Civil

Liberties Union. He was treasurer and a major spokesman for the statewide No on 9 campaign. "One of the reasons I am running... is to empower a community that I feel has been disenfranchised," he said. "I will bring a voice to the city council that has not been there before."

While bringing issues of the sexual minority community to the forefront is important to Neal, he says it is not the only topic that is driving him in his campaign. In the past, he says, he has worked to "integrate my being a gay man with my professional life of solving problems for the people of this state." He says he wants to challenge "some issues of what city government looks like and who should be able to participate in it." He has issued a proposal to restructure city government, which includes reducing the number of bureaus and making all commissioners responsible to all bureaus, separating legislative and executive responsibilities, increasing the size of the council, and creating municipal districts.

He says that the current system is burdensome and does not allow community access. "It worked when we had 40,000 people in Portland, but we have half a million people now," he said. "I see a city government that is less contemptuous of its front-line employees, that doesn't require all of this middle management. There has to be some level of consistency, both within bureaus and between bureaus, which is not there now."

It may surprise you that we don't automatically endorse candidates on the basis of their sexual orientation—though we wanted to endorse Neal for just that reason. What a coup, if Portland



Earl Blumenauer

had an openly gay city commissioner! Plus, we like the guy. Neal has worked hard in our community for years. But, being the conscientious journalists that we are, we started listening to what he was saying and began questioning how we could justify endorsing him.

He wants to reorganize the city government: Our philosophy is, if it isn't broken—don't fix it. He wants to create a hate crimes unit within the Portland Police Bureau: The bureau has had a bias crimes unit since 1991. He doesn't hesitate to verbally bash Earl Blumenauer: Blumenauer may not be the warmest human on the planet, but he has supported lesbian and gay rights for his entire political career and deserves our respect. These things made us question Neal and his motivation. If he hasn't asked the *simple* questions, like "Does the Portland Police Bureau currently have a hate crimes unit?" how can we expect him to ask the *complicated* ones? Neal doesn't have the practical political experience to implement his great plans, and it's doubtful whether he would have the support of the rest of the council. We considered a joint endorsement as an easy way out of having to make a tough decision—but we think you expect more from us. At the risk of offending the vote-gay-at-any-cost contingent, we endorse Earl Blumenauer.

Here's why. Earl Blumenauer is the most qualified candidate for the job. He has served for two terms on the Portland City Council. He eschews political bickering and says he is interested in streamlining government and making it simpler for people to understand and access.

Community policing, city growth and economic development are important to Blumenauer. As administrator of the Office of Transportation and the Bureau of Environmental Services, he

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