

Speak Out

just asking

If the election were held today, who would you support in the U.S. Senate race: incumbent Gordon Smith or Secretary of State Bill Bradbury? Would your decision be affected by a Human Rights Campaign endorsement of Smith?

Bradbury. Smith might be feeling kinder and gentler toward the LGBT community now, but his history as a senator representing our state shows he does not keep his word.

All we need to remember is this: On the record, he said he would support the mandate of the Oregon electorate on the issue of physician-assisted suicide. Within months, he changed that position based on his personal beliefs.

Gov. Barbara Roberts called it an act of betrayal and cowardice. With that kind of history, I simply can't support him with confidence.

As for the HRC endorsement, it seems likely driven by Terry Bean's personal relationship with Smith. Frankly, that makes no difference to me.

STEVEN M. CARPENTER
Portland

Iwould vote for Bradbury, although I understand political situations can change rapidly during the course of a year.

Whether HRC—or any other organization or individual—endorses a particular candidate is a factor I might consider, but a single endorsement will not substantially affect my decision. I base my votes on the entire range of each candidate's attributes and characteristics, such as history, ideology, skills, abilities and record of public service.

HRC might favor Smith's incumbency and strong support for some positive legislation. I admire him for his statesmanship, ability to work with opponents and change of heart regarding LGBT people while in office. However, Bradbury also is a proven statesman, can work with the opposition and has a better historical record on the issues important to the LGBT community.

Furthermore, given the changes during the past few years, HRC faces a dramatically different political landscape than when it endorsed Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, R-N.Y. I think it needs to consider carefully the people of Oregon, the state of the U.S. Senate and both candidates—in their entirety—before endorsing either Smith or Bradbury.

JOEL CORCORAN
Portland

Iwould vote for Bradbury. He has been supportive of the gay and lesbian community from the beginning of his career.

Despite Smith's selective change of mind on a few of our issues, he still does not wholeheartedly support the full range of issues that are important to our community. Why support someone who is only partially supportive of us when we can have someone who is 100 percent supportive?

In addition, Bradbury's overall political philosophy is more representative of the majority of Oregonians than our junior senator's. His support for a woman's right to choose in family planning, a terminally ill person's right to choose to die with dignity, the protection of the environment, middle- and lower-income Oregonians' right to adequate health care and a living wage for all Oregonians makes him a clear choice.

GEORGE EIGHMEY
Portland

I will vote for Bradbury. I would not be affected by an HRC endorsement.

Bradbury is a lifelong opponent of discrimination. He always has been endorsed by Basic Rights Oregon and Right to Pride.

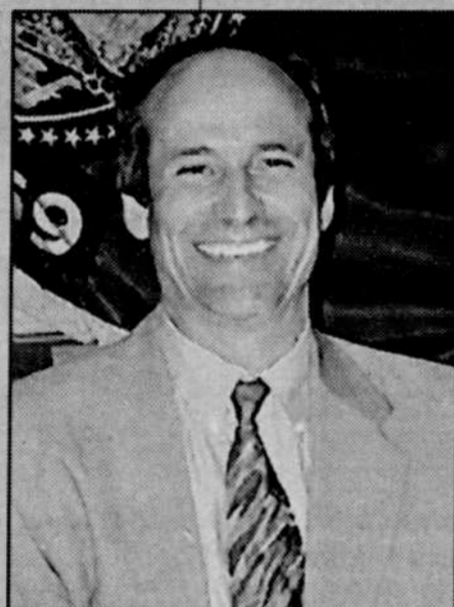
In 1993, Smith voted against Senate Bill 34, which prohibited discrimination against people based on sexual orientation. In 1993, he voted against a prohibition on local communities enacting anti-gay measures.

Bradbury is pro-choice. Smith has a 0 percent voting record on choice, according to Planned Parenthood.

Bradbury has an excellent environmental record and has been a fair and reasonable secretary of state, especially through the redistricting controversy.

DAWN MCINTYRE
Coos Bay

Bradbury. No question. I will be extremely disappointed if HRC endorses Smith. As former executive director of Right to Pride, I know the difficult situation HRC finds itself in: trying to decide whether to reward an incumbent Republican who's voted right on hate crimes or endorse the Democratic challenger



Bill Bradbury



Gordon Smith

who always has voted right on all the issues.

This shouldn't be a difficult choice. Smith's voting record in the state Senate against nondiscrimination legislation in 1993 and Bradbury's vote in support ought to be enough for HRC.

Some might say Smith has changed his position. Fine, but to me a vote's a vote.

Smith did not stand up for Oregonians' votes on death with dignity, and I never can forgive his inaction. Oregonians repeatedly have voted to protect a woman's right to choose—again, a vote Smith doesn't support.

HRC should look at his votes carefully as it decides which way to go. Regardless of its decision, Bradbury has my support.

BARRY PACK
Portland

As a former chair and active member of Right to Pride for 10 years, I'm proud of the fact that we never endorsed an anti-choice candidate. It was a bottom-line issue with us, as I believe it should be for all gay and lesbian organizations.

I vote for Bradbury. He's always been there for us, and that won't change.

He will vote right on choice, death with dignity, the environment and labor issues. I want a

U.S. senator who will vote 83 percent of the time or more with Sen. Ron Wyden and not 83 percent of the time with Sen. Jesse Helms.

DON POWELL
Portland

My vote is for Bradbury. Don't get me wrong: I like Smith. I've worked with him, and I get along well with him. He simply doesn't represent the values I and the majority of Oregonians hold dear: equal rights, freedom to choose, protection of our environment and much more.

I understand the logic of political maneuverability that could influence HRC's decision to endorse an incumbent, but in this case, it would do injustice to the very personal decision I and other Oregon voters must make: Who should be our voice in the country's highest legislative body?

There's only one answer: Bradbury. He's a leader we can count on 100 percent.

GAIL SHIBLEY
Berlin

It is a fact of human nature that we don't pay much attention to what is always there and that we notice with great excitement something new on the horizon. Bradbury always has been supportive of civil liberties for all, yet Smith, who experienced a civil liberties conversion because of his Mormon experience with discrimination (!!) is suddenly a thrilling new candidate worthy of HRC support.

I cannot agree, even if I recognize his masterful manipulation of the political game. HRC should support Bradbury or not endorse either candidate.

INGRID STEVENS
Portland

I have been a Bradbury supporter since he was a representative, and I know him to be hard worker, absolutely dedicated, a clear thinker and a supporter of things I consider important, such as the environment and finding new jobs for those whose fields of endeavor are threatened (loggers, fishermen).

VICTORIA TIERNEY
Bandon

Smith's support for hate crimes legislation in Washington, D.C., doesn't negate his ongoing connections to the Christian Coalition in Oregon. I'm supporting Bradbury.

THALIA ZEPATOS
Portland

NEXT ISSUE: Today's youth have reclaimed the word "queer" as a badge of distinction. How does it make you feel when Just Out uses the term? Proud or pained? Respond at www.justout.com. (Don't forget to include your name, city and daytime telephone number.)

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