

# Opinion / Politics

## Rep. Greg Barreto of Cove named Oregon House Republican Deputy Leader

Cove Representative Greg Barreto has been elected by his colleagues to serve as the Deputy Leader for the Oregon House Republican caucus. Rep. Barreto, who will be sworn in for his second term as a member of the Oregon House in 2017, previously served the caucus as an Assistant Leader.

“I’m honored to have

the opportunity to serve House Republicans and my constituents in this new role,” said Rep. Barreto. “I look forward to working with Leader McLane, House Republicans and our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to deliver results for Oregonians in 2017 and beyond.”

In addition to his new role as Deputy Leader, Rep. Barreto serves as

a member of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, House Business and Labor Committee and the House Education Committee. As the State Representative for House District 58, Rep. Barreto serves constituents in Wallowa County and Union County, as well as portions of Umatilla County.

## Lawsuit filed against SEIU

More than two years after the U.S. Supreme Court freed home-based caregivers from mandatory unionization, it may take a federal lawsuit to remind SEIU 503 and the state of Oregon the law applies to them, too. On Nov. 2, a case was filed in federal court in Eugene that alleges the First Amendment rights of three Medicaid-compensated home healthcare providers were violated when Service Employees International Union (SEIU 503), the labor union representing thousands of homecare workers in Oregon, declined to stop deducting dues after they had requested to opt out. SEIU 503, Oregon Gov.

Kate Brown and three other heads of state agencies were named as the defendants. The plaintiffs are represented by the Freedom Foundation and Portland attorney Tyler Smith, in conjunction with the Washington, D.C.-based National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation. The Freedom Foundation, a Northwest-based nonprofit, free-market think tank, has successfully litigated numerous similar cases over the past two years. Because the plaintiffs provide care for clients who qualify

for state Medicaid funding, they were considered public employees for “the purposes of collective bargaining” only, a status that for many years allowed SEIU 503 to charge them union dues and fees as a condition of keeping their jobs. But in 2014, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Harris v. Quinn* that forcing in-home care providers to financially support a third party organization like SEIU 503 violated their First Amendment rights of freedom of speech and association. The court recognized that in-home care providers are employees of the clients they care for—often their own elderly or disabled family members—and described forcing these “partial-public employees” to pay union dues as a money-making “scheme” for the union.

Hundreds of homecare workers in Oregon have since requested that SEIU 503 stop taking union dues from their paychecks, but very few have had their requests processed or received a response.

That’s because soon after the *Harris* decision, SEIU 503 and the state held a meeting behind closed doors to modify the contract governing homecare workers.

While they eliminated the section now overtly unconstitutional, they created a host of procedural requirements designed to make it nearly impossible for caregivers to opt out of the union deductions. Most notably, they restricted each individual’s right to opt out to an arbitrary 15-day annual window, which is different for each person and unknown to the caregivers themselves.

SEIU 503 is now even refusing to accept opt-out forms received within the appropriate windows, when submitted every 15 days by the Freedom Foundation on behalf of caregivers to help them navigate the restriction.

Hundreds still wait for their requests to be accepted.

“Here’s a news flash for the state of Oregon and the unions whose dirty work it’s doing,” said Anne Marie Gurney, the Freedom Foundation’s Oregon director.

“You’re not above the law. Unions created an exception to the Constitution in a secret meeting thinking they could get away with it—and the state of Oregon signed on the dotted line their approval. Oregonians should be appalled.”

— SPECIAL COLUMN —

*So I was thinking ...*

## About getting older

By Jimmy Ingram  
Special to The Baker County Press



Submitted Photo

Jimmy Ingram is a local farmer and father of two who enjoys people watching within our wonderful community and beyond.

I’m really not that old. At least I don’t feel like it.

When disclosing my age of 37 years to anyone who dare ask, I get one of two reactions: “Wow, I’d love to be 37 again,” or, “Wow, you’re old.”

My late grandmother used to tell me that as you age you never really feel much different on the inside, but the face looking back at you in the mirror looks different.

So while its likely those of you reading this will either be older or younger than I am, I’m sure everyone can relate to things out there that make you feel old. The things that make you wonder where the time went.

Clothes: Everyone gets a kick out of looking at old pictures of their parents. You can’t believe your dad wore a baby blue suit to his wedding or that your mom seemed to have nothing but high-waisted bell bottoms.

I remember thinking when I was a teenager, “My clothes aren’t going to be laughable when I’m older and look back.”

I was wrong. Looking through old photos makes me wonder what I was thinking—baggy jeans, silk shirts, turtlenecks, T-shirts with tacky slogans. Pictures make me realize how long ago those things were in style.

Or maybe they never were in style. Maybe I was just really young and confused.

Either way I wish I still had some of my sweaters because they’d be a hit at ugly sweater parties.

Technology: Somewhere long, long ago in a far-away land we had to rewind our movies, fast forward our tapes, make phone calls from our home, and take our camera film to the store, hoping that our pictures turned out.

It never occurred to me then that our modes of communication and entertainment were so primitive.

Everything now is so instant, so easily accessible that the machines of old are now found only on the shelves of shady secondhand stores waiting to be bought as White Elephant gifts. It is nice that technology has made life more convenient for us, but never ceases to serve as a reminder how many years have gone by.

Music: Just the other day I heard a song popular when I was in high school on a classic rock station. The DJ pointed out that 20 years had gone by since the album was released.

After doing some quick math, I was forced to let go of my denial that so many years had passed since then.

After all, classic rock was music my dad listened to when he was in college. Hippy, Woodstock, hot-rod car era stuff.

Much as I’d rather not refer to music from my youth as “classic,” I guess now some of it is ... and that makes me feel old.

Sporting goods: A quick look through a basement or garage with any sort of sporting good is bound to take you down memory lane. When golf woods were actually mad of wood, bikes seemed to weigh 100+ pounds, and ski clothes weren’t really clothes, but a colorful one-piece semi-waterproof suit.

Over the years sporting goods have become lighter, stronger, more performance oriented, and slightly better at covering up our glaring lack of athleticism.

As if it wasn’t enough having to accept that we may have lost a step, we now have to accept that the wooden tennis racket we still own is considered an ancient relic.

So if you’re like me and remember when a bike suspension was you getting grounded from your bike as a kid, you may be old.

Value of goods: We’ve all heard our parents or grandparents say things like, “When I was younger I could buy a soda for eight cents.” All you could think was, “Man, that must have been a looong time ago.”

Now I find myself saying similar things. I can remember when a haircut was under \$10 and when you could fill your gas tank for under \$20.

The economy has changed. The value of the dollar has changed. And my perspective has changed.

Some things still seem like a good deal, but as a consumer I often find myself comparing what something cost 20 years ago versus now. And this of course, is one of the surest signs of getting old.

Kids: Few things put perspective on the passing time like having kids.

You watch them grow, learn new things, and see their personalities take shape. Meanwhile your waist grows, you start to forget things, and your personality starts to develop quirks that sometimes even you don’t understand.

But one thing is static: For every year older your children get, you’re always going to be that much older. I watch my son learning to ride a bike and remember back when I did. I see my daughter laugh at silly cartoons and think about the ones I used to laugh at. Man, that was a long time ago.

It’s been said people don’t know how to act their age because “they’ve never been this old before.”

As much as we live in a culture with a premium put on youth, getting old really isn’t that bad. You learn to better value truly important things like friends and family, life philosophies, and financial and emotional stability.

Just try not to use phrases like “back in my day” and “way back when I was young” too much. Your kids will laugh and remind you that you’re older than dirt... until they feel the same way in a few years.

And they will.

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