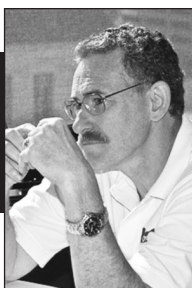


Who's On Our Side?

By Tom Chamberlain



Depending on what poll you look at, President Obama leads Republican challenger Mitt Romney by 8 to 16 points in Oregon.

Our Congressional campaigns are on what national donors call a "watch list," meaning Oregon federal races will not receive national attention unless something unforeseen happens. These folks are concerned about races that impact national policy, and frankly, Oregon is not that important to them.

In many ways, this makes Oregon elections more difficult.

It's those "down-ballot" offices that directly impact Oregon workers. Take for instance the secretary of state election where incumbent Kate Brown is responsible for making sure that candidates, political action committees, and initiative drives don't game the system and that the Oregon electoral process is fair and transparent — a process that strives to increase Oregonians' access to elections, not put up road blocks that reduce voter participation.

Oregon's vote-by-mail system is a model for elections. Vote-by-mail historically results in more people turning out to vote in Oregon than in almost any state in the country. While states such as Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Florida pass legislation designed to discourage voter participation, especially among communities of color

and older Americans and the poor, Oregon celebrates programs that ensure every eligible voter can cast a ballot.

Secretary of State Brown has cracked down on fraud in paid signature gathering. Her efforts have earned Oregon the highest marks in the country for transparency and integrity in a ballot measure system.

And Brown has been a champion of accountability and transparency, not only in our elections but in her audits of state agencies — saving Oregonians over \$180 million that can now be invested in education, community services and public safety.

On the other hand, her deep-pocketed opponent, Knute Buehler, is vocal in his support for more restrictions on voter registration and questions the legitimacy of Oregon's vote-by-mail system, saying there is "undue pressure to vote because you don't have the privacy of the polling booth."

Mr. Buehler is a wealthy candidate with no political experience. He's long on rhetoric and short on specifics. For example, his campaign focuses on the problem of big-money donors buying elections and the need for campaign finance reform, while at the same time accepting \$50,000 from Phil Knight, and thousands more from the Republican Party and timber interests.

The fight for the future of Oregon is in down-ballot offices like labor

commissioner, where Brad Avakian holds a strong record for workers. He is being challenged by state Sen. Bruce Starr, who would weaken laws that mandate middle-class wages for state and local construction projects, and would support legislation that weakens unions.

The fight for Oregon is in down-ballot races like the Oregon Supreme Court or court of appeals, local city, county, school, and fire board elections, and local measures that will impact our lives and welfare — many of them with direct consequences that we will see before the next president is even sworn in.

It is important that we all educate ourselves on the issues. Reams of material about pro-worker candidates have been sent from your union, are posted on websites, and are in the Voter's Pamphlet.

That is precisely why vote-by-mail is so uniquely Oregon — it allows us time to think over these candidates and issues, and helps ensure we all vote all the way down our ballots.

We live in a great state. Let's keep it that way. Vote and support candidates at every level who are on our side.

Tom Chamberlain is president of the Oregon AFL-CIO.

Second annual clay shoot slated Oct. 27 in Gervais

The Union Sportsmen's Alliance's (USA) second annual sporting clay shoot will be held Saturday, Oct. 27, at Mitchell's Clay Target Sports, 6181 Concomly Rd., Gervais.

Awards will be given to the highest scoring teams and top individual shooter. First time shooters are welcome and encouraged to participate.

Registration is from 8 to 9 a.m., with

shooting starting at 9:30 a.m. Registration includes shotgun shells (12- or 20-gauge only) and clay targets, lunch and beverages, along with awards, door prizes and a raffle drawing.

All proceeds from the event will help support the USA's mission to unite

the union community, to expand and improve hunting and fishing access, and wildlife habitat throughout North America.

Contact Tim Bindl at TimB@union-sportsmen.org or Heather Tazelaar at 615-831-6779 for more information.

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POWER CHAIR, Q6EDGE by Pride, lots of extras, \$6,000 new, used only 3 months, \$2,500. 503-255-5156
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'06 YAMAHA BLASTER SE, black/blue, excellent condition, tune up 9/12, clean title, \$2,000 obo. 503-397-7771
RUGER 77 MKII .300 Win., new in box, walnut/blued. \$475. 360-225-5108
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