

Guest Opinions Weigh Measure 1-63

Vote NO on 1-63

Please! Don't give your rights away! Vote NO!

I'm asking for all of our Baker County Republican, Independent, and Democrat voters to not dismantle our historical and cultural voting system. For close to 240 years we have had one of the world's best governmental structures for selecting our political leaders. This very system has stood the test of time.

When I vote, I always look for someone who is conservative and shows past experiences, beliefs and voting records that align with my core values. I also look for someone who has the leadership capabilities to bring others into this way of understanding.

A partisan primary election is the best way to choose a candidate that best supports our values and also has some accountability to the Political party and their members regarding such. The differences between the major political parties in core beliefs do have impacts on the decisions made by your County Commissioners. Examples of decisions on climate change, wind farms and environmental impact issues are constantly brought forth regarding the natural resources in Baker County.

Taking away this opportunity we all lose, all of us as voters, the ability to choose our best representative. Someone else may be making the choice for you and taking away the right that you now have. The System works when all sides choose to be a part of it. Don't change our voting system because you simply don't choose to use it. Join me in voting NO on 1-63.

Bill Harvey
Haines

People Over Politics Committee Say YES on 1-63

We support making our Baker County Commission positions nonpartisan. We ask you to support Measure 1-63.

As members of the People Over Politics for Baker County committee, we are Republicans, Democrats, and Non-affiliated voters. We are proud to be citizens of Baker County, working together for something we believe strengthens our community.

Measure 1-63 gives all registered voters a real voice in primary elections. Today, 28 percent of Baker County voters have NO say in primary elections for county commissioner. We believe that is wrong.

Baker County Republican Chair, Suzan Ellis Jones, says local control is determined by 50 precinct committee people who have the only voice when nominating commission candidates.

In the past year, 75 percent of Baker County Republican meetings have been closed to fellow Republicans — and everyone else. Perhaps the leadership of the Baker County Republicans is more interested in total control rather than local control. We are left to ask, who is the real wolf in sheep's clothing?

Under Measure 1-63, the Republican and Democrat Committees, other political parties, or any individual is free to submit a name for consideration to the County Commission when there is a vacancy. Local control at its best.

Recently, voters received an attack flyer from op-

ponents of Measure 1-63. It contained personal assaults often seen at the State and Federal level.

28 of Oregon's 36 counties have said "No thanks, not in our backyard" to that kind of politics. Last year, Wallowa, Union and Grant County voters overwhelmingly supported nonpartisan commissions.

Nothing in Measure 1-63 prohibits you from knowing your candidate. Forums, candidate gatherings, and community meetings give voters opportunities to know where someone stands. Just ask them!

We are proud to represent hundreds of Baker County Republicans, Democrats, Nonaffiliated, Independent, Libertarian, Working Family, and Other registered voters who believe the job of county commissioner requires all of us to pick the best person for the job. Like we do with the other 164 elected public officials in Baker County. Partisan politics has no role.

Vote Yes on Measure 1-63.

Thank you.

People Over Politics Committee:

Kate Rohner, Republican
Randy Joseph, Democrat
Mary Jane Guyer, Republican
Hayden Perkins, Non-affiliated
Sharon Defrees, Republican
Elliott Averett, Democrat
Dr. Bob McKim, Republican

Letters

1-63 is the Right Thing for our Community

To the Editor:

I support Measure 1-63.

Since 1870, Baker County has had 22 County Judges/Chairs. 12 have been Democrats, 9 have been Republicans, and 1 a member of the Union Party.

Since 1870, Baker County has had 55 Commissioners. 31 have been Democrats, 21 have been Republicans, 2 Populists, and 1 member of the Union Party.

All of these dedicated people have helped to manage our resources, build our roads, create emergency management operations, and develop public health systems. They have been responsible for large budgets and provided oversight to hundreds of employees. They have struggled through local planning challenges and shifting financial conditions. They have been actively involved in the County's natural resource-based economy through the timber, agriculture, mining opportunities, and the outstanding recreational opportunities.

They have committed themselves to this challenging job because of their shared dedication to all the people of Baker County, not because of their political affiliation.

I cast my vote for county commissioners because of their ability to do the job, not because of their political affiliation. I cast my vote for a county commissioner because I ask where they stand on the issues. I don't rely on their party affiliation to fill in the blanks.

I believe every registered voter should have a voice that matters in primaries — not based on their political affiliation but because they care about Baker County.

Vote Yes for Measure 1-63. It is the right thing for our community.

Thank you.

Mike Rudi
Baker City

We Need to Know and Vote 'NO'

To the Editor:

Please vote NO on measure 1-63. We need to know. We need to know all we can about our candidates for office of Baker County executive branch. We need to know their history, positions, character, and political party. We need to know because all these things help us make a more informed decision when we vote. The founding fathers thought so too. The effort, time and deliberation by these very informed and dedicated men gave us the form of government we have now. It has worked well, certainly better than other countries with their systems. When

we read Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison we should be grateful for their effort and thoughtfulness. Please vote NO on measure 1-63. Remember, knowledge is power. Conversely, lack of knowledge is weakness. Let us not give up our ability to acquire knowledge. Please vote NO on measure 1-63.

Tom Van Diepen
Baker City

Vote No on Baker County Measure 1-63

To the Editor:

Partisanship is a normal and healthy characteristic of a multi-party political system. Civilized disagreement between parties with opposing views promotes compromise and thereby supports a form of democratic government that is most acceptable to a majority its constituents. Until such time that all citizens share identical values and beliefs, healthy partisanship is the path to balance and stability in representative government.

Partisanship is transparent. In a partisan political system, the philosophies of candidates are recognizable and require minimal investigation by the individual voter to know where a candidate should stand on most major issues. It is naive to presume that decisions made by a "non-partisan" elected official will not be influenced by his or her personal political views.

In Oregon's closed primary election system, citizens are permitted to choose only from candidates who registered in their political party. This is a restriction on free choice at the ballot box, presumably made because there is a benefit to be obtained by constraining voter freedom.

Major political parties support a closed primary election system because it protects their influence over which candidates are most likely to be elected, even when those candidates may be unpopular with the party's voters. In a closed primary election, if Party A supports Candidates 1 or 2 for an office, Party A voters who do not like Candidates 1 or 2 do not have the freedom to vote instead for Candidate 3 from Party B. The implication is that political parties consider their control over the voters' primary election choices to be more important than the voters' freedom to choose whomever they please. The closed primary system removes the voters' ability to tell the party they do not like the candidates the party is fielding.

Oregon voters have recently rejected two statewide measures to replace the closed primaries with an open primary system commonly known as a "Top-Two" or non-partisan blanket primary. Despite widespread bi-partisan support from elected officials,

Measure 65 was defeated in 2008 by a 66% to 34% vote, and Measure 90 was defeated in 2014 by a 68% to 32% vote. Not surprisingly, Oregon political parties were key opponents to both measures. A clarification of terminology is worth mentioning at this point: in the context of closed vs. open primary systems, the term "non-partisan" does not refer to any concealment of the political philosophy of a candidate, but rather to the removal of a party-based restriction on the voter. A non-partisan blanket primary is a single, universal election in which all candidates and their affiliations are listed on the ballot and all voters are eligible to vote.

If either of the aforementioned measures had passed, Oregon's citizens would now be living with a primary election system that provides one ballot for all voters, with no party restrictions and no barriers to free choice. The top two candidates for each office chosen in this type of primary become the final two candidates in the general election. In open non-partisan blanket primary systems (Top-Two systems), political parties lose control over how citizens vote, whereas citizens lose a restriction on how they vote.

Recently in Baker County, registered Democrats were prevented from voting in a primary election for County Commissioner seats because Oregon has a closed primary election system and because no Democratic candidates filed for a seat. A number of Baker citizens who rightly resent voter exclusion policies have proposed to remedy this problem by making the County Commissioner positions non-partisan. In essence, their approach is to open up the primaries to all voters by eliminating transparency and healthy partisanship in county government. This is a step in the wrong direction. It ignores the actual problem inherent in the closed primary system while attempting to paint over it with two new problems.

A more intelligent solution would be to leave the political persuasions of the Commissioners transparent to all voters and instead devote effort to making Oregon primary elections open and non-partisan.

Vote NO on Baker County Measure 1-63. The next time you see a statewide measure for "Top Two" or non-partisan blanket primaries in Oregon, vote YES!

The Constitution of the United States of America provides numerous invaluable protections to the American voting citizen, but it never makes a single mention of political parties. Many states have seen recent efforts to adopt open blanket primary election systems. This represents an expanding realization by many Americans that it is time to regain their full voting voice by taking it back from organized political parties.

David Spaugh
Baker City

More **LETTERS** on page 5



Can anyone out there help me find my home and owner? I was picked up by some nice people on the Medical Springs Road and given to some great ladies with Best Friends of Baker. I am an older neutered male and they think that I am some kind of Terrier/Chihuahua mix. I have short white hair with black spots and a long tail. I am an extremely nice and friendly guy and I really like men. Don't get me wrong, I like the women also, but I think that I may be a man's dog.

I walk well on a leash, use a doggie door, and like to lie on a lap when riding in the car. I was taken to the veterinarian for a well check. I had my nails clipped, was vaccinated for Rabies and Parvo/Distemper and wormed. I am currently staying in a home with a woman and her 4 small dogs and so far we are all getting along. If you know where I can find my owner, please call Carmen at 541-519-4530 or Best Friends. If nobody claims me, I will then be available for adoption the second week of May.

Call Best Friends of Baker, Inc.

541-519-7387

Adopt a Friend!

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Buy at the lowest possible price, sale ends May 31.

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