

# Fagan, Thatcher vie for Oregon Secretary of State

By Gary A. Warner  
Oregon Capital Bureau

The top two candidates for Secretary of State said Oct. 12 they did not want to use that office as a stepping stone to running for governor in 2022 and questioned each other's independence from influence by their political parties.

Sen. Shemia Fagan, D-Portland, and Sen. Kim Thatcher, R-Keizer, are facing off in the Nov. 3 election for the only statewide office without an incumbent on the ballot. It's only executive office held by a Republican in a state where Democrats also have a super-majority in the Legislature.

Thatcher and Fagan appeared Monday in an online virtual forum hosted by EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group, which combined operate 39 newspapers and two magazines throughout Oregon. The moderator was Gerry O'Brien, editor of The Bulletin, an EO Media newspaper in Bend. A video recording of the forum can be found at facebook.com/bendbulletin.

Oregon is one of five states that does not have a lieutenant governor. The Secretary of State becomes governor if the incumbent dies or leaves office. Gov. Kate Brown was Secretary of State in 2015 when Gov. John Kitzhaber resigned amid allegations of influence-peddling.

Thatcher promised to carry on the legacy of Secretary of State Dennis Richardson, the



State Senator Shemia Fagan, D-Portland, at left, campaigns with U.S. Senator Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, meeting with supporters on the grass at Thompson Track, a former school athletic track in The Dalles, on Wednesday night, Oct. 14. Fagan, a graduate of Wahtonka High School in The Dalles, is running for Oregon Secretary of State against Oregon Senator Kim Thatcher, R-Keizer.

Mark B. Gibson photo

Republican elected to the office in 2016. Richardson announced in June 2018 that he had been diagnosed with a brain tumor. He died in February 2019. Under Oregon law, Gov. Brown was required to name a Republican to fill out the remainder of Richardson's term. She appointed former House Speaker Bev Clarno of Redmond, a Republican, with the implicit agreement that Clarno would not run for the office this year.

Thatcher said that if Richardson were alive, he would be "sailing to re-election."

"Voters crossed party lines



Sen. Kim Thatcher

'the club.'

Thatcher also touted her endorsement by the Independent Party. Though it accounts for just under 125,000 of the state's nearly 2.87 million registered voters, it is recognized as the state's official third major party. In 2020, the party has given

because we need checks and balances in our government," Thatcher said, adding later, "it's a little easier when you're not part of

its endorsement to both Democrats and Republicans in state races.

Fagan said it is up to voters to decide who is Secretary of State.

"I don't think any political party is owed a position," she said.

Fagan promised to be an independent advocate for all Oregonians.

"Ultimately, it's what your values are," not the political party label, she said.

While the forum was generally cordial, each candidate took shots at the other.

Thatcher questioned Fagan's independence, saying she was "beholding"

to Brown and other top Democrats. The Secretary of State needs to be "a watchdog in state government, not a lapdog."

Thatcher said large donations from unions and Democratic Party groups would undercut Fagan's independence.

Fagan has raised just under \$1.8 million, while Thatcher has raised just over \$576,000. Fagan spent heavily to win a close May primary, beating Sen. Mark Hass, D-Beaverton by just 4,400 votes out of more than 587,000 cast. Former 2nd Congressional District candidate Jamie McLeod-Skinner of Terrebonne finished a distant third. Thatcher received 85 percent of the vote in the Republican primary.

Fagan criticized Thatcher for being part of Senate Republicans' walk-outs to deny a quorum to vote on a carbon cap-and-trade bill that Democrats said they had enough votes to pass.

Fagan also hit Thatcher for refusing to say whether she will vote for President Donald Trump's re-election. Thatcher was a delegate from Oregon to the 2016 Republican National Convention. She had supported Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, early in the election season, but ended up casting her delegate vote for Trump. She was quoted in the Portland Tribune as saying, "I can honestly say I feel less uncomfortable with Trump."

Fagan accused Thatcher of being a candidate "propped

up by extreme right-wing groups."

"The bottom line is she is signaling one thing to her base and something else to the rest of us," Fagan said.

There were some areas of broad agreement. Fagan said she had "no plans" to run for governor in 2022. Thatcher said that if elected, she would serve four years and likely run for re-election as Secretary of State.

Each said they would aggressively pursue audits of government agencies and programs. Thatcher said she would "shine a light" on parts of government that were not working for residents. Fagan singled out the unemployment system. She said audits were done before and part of her audit would be why the earlier audits were not implemented.

Both generally support Oregon's vote-by-mail system and creating a commission to decide legislative district lines for reapportionment. Both want a more independent public records advocate.

The Secretary of State's Audits Division investigates and issues reports on public spending by state government. The Elections Division has oversight of elections, including candidate filings, campaign finance records and ballot measures. The Corporate Division handles business filings. The Archives Division maintains the state government's records.

## BALLOTS Drop off, mail or replace a ballot

Continued from page 1

the high interest in this election," Wasco County Clerk Lisa Gambee said in an email on Friday afternoon. "We're already getting ballots back from the main mailing two days ago which is quicker than previous years."

### Mail it or hand-deliver

"We understand voters have concerns about the recent news regarding the United State Postal System," Johnson said. "We have been communicating closely with our partners at the USPS and they continue to support our elections and go above and beyond to make sure that ballots travel efficiently through the mail. They have told us that no delay is expected in mail delivery during this election. Oregon has been doing voting successfully by mail for 20 years and we expect continued success this year."

Secure ballot drop sites:  
Wasco County — Maupin Civic Center, County Courthouse, Fifth Street.  
Hood River County — Administrative Building, Sixth and State; Cascade Locks City Hall

Klickitat County — Bickleton, E. Market and S. Madison streets; Bingen City Hall; Dallesport Community Center; Glenwood, 209 E. Main; Goldendale, north

of alley at 114 S. Columbia; Klickitat, Depot Park; Lyle Lions Club; Roosevelt School; Trout Lake, east of Post Office; White Salmon, 501 N.E. Washington; and Wishram Park

### Ballot requirements

Key points to remember about voting by mail:

- Filling out a ballot is simple but it needs to be done according to instructions provided.
- Fully fill in the oval next to your candidate or ballot measure choice; don't use a check mark or X.
- Put your ballot in the inner sleeve, and place the sleeve inside the return envelope.
- Seal the ballot envelope, which is pre-paid.
- Sign the envelope. Sign only your own name.
- Remember that a ballot can be invalidated, or subject to delayed tabulation, if the ballot is incorrectly marked, or the signature is incomplete or does not match the voter registration on record at your county.

### Ballot tracking, follow-up

Wasco County elections office: 541-506-2530  
Klickitat County elections office: 509-773-4001  
Hood River County elections office: 541-386-1442  
Track your ballot at the Secretary of State website Oregonvotes.gov by going to the My Vote link at secure.sos.state.or.us/orestar.  
Give the Postal Service at least one week to get your

ballot to you before requesting a replacement. Election offices offer curbside service, where you can make an appointment and pull up to our front curb and staff will bring necessary paperwork to you. Replacement ballots may be requested right up to 8 p.m. on Election Day.

### Stolen ballots found

Over the weekend, the Oregon State Police recovered pieces of stolen mail,

including 12 general election ballots belonging to Hood River residents living on Eugene Street, Hazel Street, and Lovers Lane.

The ballots were returned to the Elections Office and all of the voters have been mailed replacement ballots on Oct. 19, deputy clerk Darlene Johnson reported late Monday afternoon. If you have not received your ballot, contact the Hood River Elections Office at 541-386-1442.

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# CHRIS CORRY

For State Representative - R

*"Representing the people of Central Washington means supporting our community members and bringing common sense Conservative values to Olympia. It has been an honor to serve our district and I ask for your vote this November to continue working on policies that protect our Constitutional freedoms and minimize burdens on hard-working families and businesses."*

- Representative Chris Corry





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These are unprecedented and challenging times. Now more than ever it is critical **we come together as one in support of our local hospital** — one team making a difference in the lives of our communities.

**VOTE YES** on **Skyline Hospital's levy!** Your "yes" vote will help ensure our communities have the local resources to stay healthy and happy.

*Support funded by the Skyline Foundation levy committee.*