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have had some robust conversations with City officials, many of whom have a lot of knowledge to share. I am hopeful that the City will achieve meaningful results, work to turn around the underinvestment, and create a new tradition.

To have success, we can't just rage against the machine. We will need champions at the city. The heroes will be the local citizens and champions at City Hall. I would love to help those people be heroes.

At the same time, we do need to raise the clarion call and raise awareness. People all over Portland need to recognize that ground zero for social justice is a bit east. Portland is a fantastic city. When our will is applied, we can do almost anything. We need to focus that will on eastward challenges and opportunities.

I.B.: *Being a rep from the biggest city in the state, yet falling on the boundaries of an area that has historically been left out of many conversations around regional planning – can you talk about some of your experiences in Salem?*

J.S.: I do feel like I serve at least two masters. Statewide, our city has critics who call Portland a hub of elite liberalism. Yet, our city is clearly much more diverse than that. At the same time, many non-Portlanders recognize that some of the economic challenges in my district are similar to the challenges facing districts across the state. In the legislature, I find myself advocating for the City of Portland to get its share of resources, such as with foreclosure support. Locally, I find myself wanting to help the region boost and acknowledge the priority of East of Gateway.

I.B.: *Gov. Ted Kulongoski has called for a 9 percent cut of state spending through the general fund for this upcoming budget cycle, which will no doubt have lasting impacts on our region. Is this the right move, and is it going to affect us?*

J.S.: It's both the right move and a terribly unfortunate move. The governor did the right thing to apply his allotment authority so that agencies can absorb the cuts as quickly as possible. At the same time, the state budget is an admittedly lamentable situation. The legislature might go into special session if there is something to do that would get sufficient support and wouldn't be merely rearranging deck chairs.

It is no surprise that the state budget is hurting, just as are many Oregon families and businesses. As a general matter, it is important to remember that the state is different, of course, from a typical private company. In a down economy, most companies see reduced demand, but public services see more demand. While people are shopping less at Macy's, they are claiming more from food banks and unemployment. So while it is necessary for the state to cut budgets, we also need to recognize that sometimes those cuts are even less kind.

I.B.: *What is Salem doing for the working poor who have been falling into the ranks of homelessness and poverty at alarming rates?*



J.S.: Overall, it's not nearly enough, and I point the finger at myself as much as anyone. For 30 years, there has been a well-funded movement to cripple government and erode public structures. People should remember that control of the legislature only recently shifted. I can be a critic of Democrats, and party affiliation is certainly not a sufficient indicator of merit or values. That said, under Democratic control of the Legislature, there has been some meaningful progress.

We expanded the Oregon Health Plan to include 35,000 additional Oregonians. Now, nearly every child in Oregon has access to health insurance. We authorized \$19 million in emergency funding to extend unemployment insurance for 12,000 workers. We extended worker's compensation benefits to in-home care workers. We worked to preserve employment-related day care for working parents. Each of these accomplishments had little to do with my own effort, to be clear. The Legislature is a team sport. I did work on some of these and related issues upon being appointed to the Oregon Hunger Task Force, and I hope to be helpful going forward.

I.B.: *As a community, we have focused a lot of its attention on studying equity and the shifting sands of poverty, and what gentrification means in Portland. We have done little to act on our findings and create a lasting revenue stream for such things as housing and basic services. Is a housing levy, or another established revenue stream, needed for poor and working people in our region?*

J.S.: We definitely need a better system of funding basic services for people in our region. One idea is to remove the state preemption on counties from taxing tobacco. Counties provide many of the basic services upon which the most vulnerable of us depend. Multnomah County in particular has gone through several years of budget cuts, and a tobacco tax could help maintain critical funding.

We need to reassess our state's entire system of revenues and expenditures. We are dependent on unstable income tax revenues, we are prohibited from Keynesian deficit spending in bad times, and in good times we kick the surplus back instead of saving for

leaner years. Those issues have been publicized.

Here's an issue that has not been as well publicized: We now spend more on tax expenditures (tax breaks and credits) than we do on education, public safety and health care combined. That's more than half of our general fund budget, compared to just a third in the early in early 1990s. This is the result of some structural defects that have to be addressed.

I.B.: *Your district has seen an increase in new Portlanders (immigrants and refugees) from around the globe – all coming with different perspectives, cultures and ways of life. Can you talk about the challenges and successes of some of these individuals and families?*

J.S.: I'll answer this question from the perspective of David Douglas High School. The school has a student body that collectively speaks more than 70 languages. The cultural integration at David Douglas is a story of success. In fact, the school recently received national attention for its outstanding performance in spite of the odds.

Over that same period, it has gone from having 50 percent to over 75 percent of its students on free or reduced-price lunch. If you do the math that means essentially all of the growth has been from low-income families. The challenge for many schools is that growth in students has not been matched with growth in resources. And the residents of the area have less access to levers of power, and less comfort pulling those levers.

I.B.: *What are the implications of Voter Owned Elections' fate for state politics where special interests are arguably way more present and powerful?*

J.S.: I prefer the term private interest instead of special interest. There is a difference between public interest groups such as the Oregon League of Conversation Voters, Stand for Children, and 1,000 Friends and private interests such as oil, energy companies, housing developers, or the host of entities advocating for the bottom line of themselves or their members.

Portland voters need to reaffirm Voter-

Owned Elections. In the wake of the Supreme Court's decision in Citizens United, that reaffirmation is even more important. If local areas vote in favor of Voter-Owned Elections, it increases the likelihood that other jurisdictions will consider the notion.

If candidates are seeking \$5,000 contributions rather than \$5 contributions, the influence of folks who can give \$5,000 will be increased. And the smaller contribution will include a greater swath and cross section of our democracy.

The state could indeed benefit from reform in campaign finance. Prof. Bruce Ackerman from Yale has a public finance policy idea that is my favorite on the topic. There is a lot of work to do to build support for reforming campaign finance, and we should encourage that work.

The greatest campaign reform is an active, engaged electorate. One of the benefits of Voter-Owned Elections is that there are now 6,000 or so people who have given \$5 to a candidate and feel invested in the process. In a democracy, we get the government we deserve. Folks should get involved.

I.B.: *If you had to zero in on one or two specific policies or events to help the livability of East County – what would they be?*

J.S.: Infrastructure, including transportation and public spaces. Sidewalk and road improvements, increased bus service, improved MAX safety, and more parks. We have some great places to work, but too few of our small business owners also live in the area. We need to build a space that's a good place both to work and live.

Schools. As the population has increased we need to make sure school facilities follow. Twenty-four to 28 percent of Portlanders and over 40 percent of Portland's schoolchildren live east of 82nd. That's a big deal for planning.

I.B.: *You are a founding member of the Oregon Bus Project. Can you talk a little bit about the Bus and how this has impacted politics in Oregon and around the country?*

J.S.: I am deeply proud of the work the Bus has done. Bus volunteers have knocked on nearly 300,000 doors, the Bus Foundation has registered over 60,000 voters, and numerous young and future public interest leaders have emerged. In 2004, Oregon had one of the nation's two biggest gaps between the turnout of younger and older voters. In 2008, Oregon saw the nation's biggest growth in youth vote share.

The biggest challenges facing the world, in my view, are how do we build a high road economy, an economic system that is prosperous, sustainable and just, and how do we build a democracy and systems of decisions that can yield broad-minded public interest outcomes. The Bus explores those issues, develops leaders for the future, and works directly on an engaged electorate and a better democracy. The work of the volunteers inspires me every day.

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