

WYDEN, from page 4

said, "I wish I had that power." And I just looked at that and I said, "He can't possibly be saying that!" But he is, and that's why you're right about this really being a crucial time for people to be involved. I just had 3,500 people out at David Douglas High School. Incredible. What a showing of representative democracy!

Emily Green: *We want to know about your town halls in more rural areas of Oregon, like in Medford or La Grande. Are you seeing that Oregon Republicans are concerned about the Trump agenda?*

R.W.: Let's put it this way: On this trip, first I was in Albany at the beginning of the year. I had 1,500 people in Linn County – a county Trump won overwhelmingly, and over the last eight days, I've had 11 town hall meetings. We've had the most grassroots government as any part of the country here in the last week. And I was in Coos and Curry counties, and those are counties where Trump won by more than 20 percentage points. And while there were different concerns than I heard today, I heard a lot of the same points; I'd tell you that.

I heard about the Affordable Care Act, I heard about the Russians, I heard about press freedom, an independent judiciary, a lot of concern about protecting our air and water, so there's a lot more in common this trip – this last eight days – a lot more in common than there were differences.

E.G.: *You've been a longtime champion of protecting Americans' privacy. I think a lot of people want to know: Should they be worried about their digital footprint – especially if they might be seen as an adversary to the Trump agenda?*

R.W.: As I just said to your partner Dennis, when the DNC was hacked, Trump said, "I wish I had that power." I don't know anything that sums it up more clearly – now his nominee to head the CIA (Mike Pompeo) – and I led the opposition to the nominee – has proposed something that is more sweeping than anything that's been discussed. You can see a very long op-ed article in the Wall Street Journal where he advertised it. He advocated for creating a centralized database, sweeping aside a number of the protections, and then he said it ought to include lifestyle information, and I asked him about all these things, and (he said), "Oh, I don't do policy," and I said, "Wait a minute, the CIA director is in the room when the president is talking about intelligence matters."

Editor's note: In a Jan. 3, 2016, op-ed, Pompeo, who was then a member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, wrote:

"Congress should pass a law re-establishing collection of all metadata, and combining it with publicly available financial and lifestyle information into a comprehensive, searchable database. Legal and bureaucratic impediments to surveillance should be removed."

E.G.: *At his confirmation hearing, you had requested he submit whatever limitations might be placed on such a sweeping program. Has he submitted any such list?*

R.W.: No. He would say things like, "Well, current law doesn't allow this," but the whole point is he wrote a very long article



Street Roots vendor Dennis Chavez (left) interviews Sen. Ron Wyden about the Patriot Act at the Street Roots office Feb. 25.

PHOTO BY ARKADY BROWN

advocating changing current law. And his supporters would always try to weave in matters relating to current law. The point is, in his article, he called for a major transformation in the protections the American people have. And as I've said repeatedly, I don't take a backseat to anybody in terms of protecting our security. I wrote section 102 of the Freedom Act that says when there is really a threat to the country, the government can get the information and come back and settle up later with respect to the warrant process. That's not what we're talking about here. The question is whether or not we're going to have an enormous – beyond anything that we've had in the past because as you know Congress, with the Freedom Act, reined it in – are we going to have something that's more encompassing than ever before with respect to collecting information on law-abiding Americans?

E.G.: *What about right now, if the Trump administration, let's say they wanted to go on some sort of a witch hunt and started plucking people out, who knows, maybe they have a climate change agenda or undocumented immigrants ...*

R.W.: We've seen a lot of scientists be worried. I talked today about the fact that I'm co-chair of the Whistleblower (Protection) Caucus, and I told people, "If you know of instances where there is improper conduct and you can't get it addressed, I want to hear about it." My philosophy is, as I touched on today, when you see something that's wrong, speak out,

push back and offer smart alternatives. So if the Trump administration insists on saying, "Millions of people are voting fraudulently," I've got a response: Let's take Oregon's vote by mail national, which would give a paper trail for every ballot and would respond to things like fraud and hacking.

"I'm a military veteran; I spent four years in the Army as a Chinook helicopter mechanic. But you know, I'm just like, the country we have now is not the country I swore to defend. And I'm unhappy about that. What can I do about it?"

DENNIS CHAVEZ
STREET ROOTS VENDOR

E.G.: *Let's say the Trump administration did want to do some sort of witch hunt. Do they have access to the kind of digital information that they would need, on innocent Americans, to be able to find those people? Are there any programs that you are particularly concerned about?*

R.W.: There is a section in the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act that will be coming up for renewal before long, and what the law says is when there's grounds to do so, you can follow a foreign threat – an individual overseas that's a foreign threat – and we typically understand that there can be validity in that kind of approach. But what's happened is communications systems now are no longer stopping at national lines – it's really become globally integrated, and my concern has been, for a number of years, a number of law-biding individuals get swept up in those searches, and their data is reviewed without a warrant. So I really hope to be able to plug what I call that "backdoor search loophole." In the hands of someone who was unscrupulous, that would be a very serious threat.

Editor's note: Wyden is referring to Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, titled "Procedures for Targeting Certain

Persons Outside the United States Other Than United States Persons," which expires at the end of 2017.

E.G.: *I also wanted to ask you about net neutrality. The new FCC chairman has said repeatedly it's something he wants to go after. My question is: Do you think there is a risk in the changes that he is proposing affecting the way Americans get their news, particularly from small independent media?*

R.W.: Very much so. And I'm a very strong supporter of net neutrality. I introduced, actually, the first net neutrality bill in 2006. (The Internet Non-Discrimination Act was not enacted.) And just for purposes of your readers and others, I think telecom and the lingo in the communications field can be a little daunting sometimes, but what net neutrality means is after you pay your internet access fee, you get to go where you want, when you want, how you want, and everybody's treated equally. That's what net neutrality, in its essence, is all about. And of course these very powerful telecommunications interests would like to change that. They would like to create almost an information aristocracy, where you could pay more for fast lanes and content and the like.

But yes, depending on how you do it, you could really limit the ability of content providers, the small news outlets you're talking about, to be able to communicate, and I think small newspapers, community radio, these kinds of news sources, are hugely important in our state. And I've indicated that I will fight with everything I've got to protect net neutrality. I led the fight against PIPA (Protect IP Act) and SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Act), these bills that, in the name of fighting piracy, would have really damaged the internet. Nobody thought we could win. There were more

See WYDEN, page 7