



ELECTION ENDORSEMENTS

BY THE EW STAFF

Ballots go in the mail beginning Friday, Oct. 19, for the Nov. 6 general election. The deadline for voter registration passed Oct. 16. Here are our selected picks in contested races and issues. See our recent news stories, Slant comments and letters for more information, along with the Voters' Pamphlet and websites for candidates and measures. We'll have more stories next week. Campaign finance information can be found at ORESTAR on the Oregon secretary of state's website.

PRESIDENT OF THE U.S.

Barack Obama

It's up to America's women to march to the polls and loudly cast their votes to defeat Mitt Romney and his party. Although it fluctuates slightly, the "gender gap" is the widest margin of victory that pollsters consistently see for Obama. For good reason. The Republican attacks on women come from every perspective: social, sexual, economic, educational and, of course, judicial. Women really have no choice but to fight back at the ballot box, hopefully re-electing Barack Obama.

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE

Peter DeFazio (D)

DeFazio faces a challenge from Art Robinson again, the same out-of-state hedge-fund millionaire financed wingnut who thinks a little radiation is good for you. Congressman DeFazio pisses us off sometimes. His forest plan hasn't made anyone happy and his position on coal is a little more nuanced than just plain "No" — it's more in the "clean coal" camp, so he's pissing off Oregon's enviros as well. But he is unafraid to stand up and take a position, whether it's on the House floor or in person, and he's smarter and saner than his opponent by far. Vote DeFaz.

OREGON SUPREME COURT

Richard Baldwin

A powerful range of experience and a judicial temperament make Richard Baldwin clearly superior to Nena Cook for the Supreme Court. He's gone from legal aid to the Multnomah County Circuit Court (elected 2002 and 2008), earning the endorsements of former governors Barbara Roberts and Ted Kulongoski plus Supreme Court Justice Robert Durham, whom he would succeed. Cook's exaggerations of her experience concern us — so inappropriate for a Supreme Court candidate.

OREGON COURT OF APPEALS, POS. 6

James C. Egan

James Egan is a sitting judge on the Linn County Circuit Court and his private law career focused on representing injured people in workers comp and personal injury cases. He also served as a JAG attorney, including a tour in the Middle East. The Court of Appeals needs members who have worked as trial court judges.

SECRETARY OF STATE

Kate Brown (D)

The few moderate Republicans left in Oregon politics are so eager for new leadership that they're willing to throw an outstanding, dedicated and highly experienced Democratic woman under the bus in this election. That's probably not surprising. It's good that Knute Buehler, a Bend physician, is stepping up as a moderate Republican, but he and his wealthy backers and the conservative press are irresponsible in their target. Kate Brown does have a serious political problem; she hates to ask anyone for more than \$250 in contributions. That should be a plus in a rational world.

STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Ellen Rosenblum (D)

No brainer. She waged a tough primary, won handily and was appointed by the governor to fill John Kroger's unexpired term. After 36 years of experience as a judge, federal prosecutor and private practice attorney, she aspired to be Oregon's first woman attorney general and she should win handily again.

STATE TREASURER

Ted Wheeler (D)

Another no-brainer. This is Oregon's chief financial officer who manages investment of state money, the sale of state bonds and helps oversee management of state lands. Wheeler has done such a good job with the state's money after his appointment by the governor that he deserves our continued support. Oregon is lucky to have him.

STATE LABOR COMMISSIONER

Brad Avakian

Organized labor is supporting Avakian, and business generally considers him approachable. He's done a good job for four years. That's good enough for us.

BALLOT MEASURE 77

(RESPONSE TO DISASTERS)

YES

Oregon seems so quiet, disaster-wise, compared to the Midwest's tornados or Cali's earthquakes, but we do have a strong potential for killer quakes, tsunamis, floods and volcanic eruptions. Measure 77 also notes wars and acts of terrorism as disasters that need money, quickly, to help deal with them. Measure 77 would, among other things, let the governor make initial decisions, such as temporarily allocating money from lottery funds and the general fund for disaster response, without legislative approval.

BALLOT MEASURE 78

(CHANGES TERMINOLOGY IN CONSTITUTION)

YES

This seemingly benign measure actually has a dash of progressivism. In addition to amending constitutional language (replacing "departments" of government to "branches" of government), it will replace gender-biased wording ("he" and "him" for references to the secretary of state) with gender-neutral language.

BALLOT MEASURE 79

(BANS REAL ESTATE TRANSFER TAXES)

NO

The National Association of Realtors, those folks who refer to themselves always with a capital letter, "Realtor," bring you Measure 79, which would constitutionally ban new taxes and fees on real estate sales. The Realtors, state and national, have poured almost \$5 million into the campaign to ban something the state already bans. Right now, local governments can't enact a real estate transfer tax, though the Legislature could do so in the future. Opponents say a real estate transfer tax could be a future lifeline and we should leave the option out there. We agree.

BALLOT MEASURE 80

(OREGON CANNABIS TAX ACT)

YES

For decades now, we've been throwing money down the toilet trying to keep Americans from consuming marijuana, and those billions of dollars have gotten the U.S. pretty much nowhere. For years, The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University has reported that it's easier for 12- to 17-year-olds to buy pot, a prohibited substance, than it is to buy beer, a regulated substance. Perhaps this measure isn't the word-for-word pro-regulation bill that we would have written, but it's a far cry from today's sad state of affairs. And if the state ends up having to back down from a legal battle, it's not the end of the world. At least the voters have spoken.

BALLOT MEASURE 81

(GILLNETTING BAN)

NO

It seems weird that *EW* would be against a pro-environment measure, but several groups that originally supported the commercial gillnetting ban no longer support their measure. Gillnets are a very effective way of catching fish, some say too effective when it comes to the Columbia River's salmon and other species. Gov. Kitzhaber has come up with a solution to the problem that eliminates gillnets from the mainstem of the Columbia River while allowing their use in select off-channel sites. Let's give Kitzhaber's compromise proposal a shot.