

professional career just prior to the time of her husband's inauguration. She's also the first former first lady to run for elected office and to serve in the U.S. Cabinet.

If her campaign ends in success, Clinton will add another first to that list: first woman president of the U.S.

As a presidential candidate, Clinton's gender has undeniably played a role in her campaign — from overt sexism in reaction to her campaign to the prospect of finally seeing a female commander in chief.

Even the use of her first name has prompted discussion. Is it sexist to call her "Hillary" when Donald Trump goes by "Trump" and no one calls Ted Cruz "Ted"? Yet, Bernie Sanders goes by "Bernie." Perhaps bringing gender into politics inevitably opens new lines of thought.

Lane County supporters say Clinton's gender is only one of many factors that make her an ideal candidate.

"I'm not supporting her because she is a woman," Cox says. "But I'm eager to have a qualified, competent woman in the White House. That is undeniably part of her appeal. It's not just any woman, but this woman, and at the right time."

Phoebe Bellisario, a sophomore in political science at the University of Oregon, says that she has experienced stereotyping: "I hear people say, 'Oh, you're a woman so you have to vote for Hillary,' but I don't think that's the case," she explains. "I like Hillary, and I'm not voting for her because she's a woman. She just happens to be a woman."

Still, Clinton fans acknowledge the significance of potentially seeing the first woman president take office.

"It would be a huge milestone for women's rights," Bellisario says.

Cox points out that countries around the world have had women leaders, including her birth country — South Korea currently has a female president, Park Geun-hye.

"I think about my granddaughter and daughter," Cox says. "For that generation, when you look at pay equity and so many different issues, the glass ceiling has not been fully broken through, and having a woman in the White House is taking that next step."

Evangelina Sundgrenz, creator of the "Lane County Democrats for Hillary" Facebook page, says that "it would be incredibly important, not just because I believe women have not been given their fair share of leadership opportunities in this country, but because of what it would mean for half our society. Our girls would see that they, too, can become president."

WAIT YOUR TURN

In 2016, women running for president still face an onslaught of sexism, and Hillary Clinton has long been a favorite target. Her political career shows she's no stranger to this treatment: In 1992, when Bill Clinton was running for president, a frustrated Hillary Clinton, who was working as an attorney at the time, said to reporters, "I suppose I could have stayed home and baked cookies and had teas,

but what I decided to do was to fulfill my profession, which I entered before my husband was in public life."

The comment sparked outrage from stay-at-home moms.

During this election cycle, we've seen Donald Trump bash *Fox News* reporter Megyn Kelly for having blood "coming out of her whatever"; after giving an opening statement in which she mentioned her struggle with breast cancer, former Republican presidential candidate Carly Fiorina fielded a tweet from radio show host Steve Deance, who said, "Wow ... Fiorina goes full vagina right away"; and more recently, MSNBC host Joe Scarborough tweeted, "Smile. You just had a big night," regarding Clinton's March 15 victory speech after she won several primaries. Can we please stop telling women to smile?

The sexism inherent in these comments shows the entrenched opposition that women face. To Clinton's Lane County supporters, it's a source of frustration.

Sundgrenz says women in leadership positions are at a disadvantage, because society views outspoken women as aggressive or bossy. "In the same way, we see her treatment in the campaign," she says.

Bellisario says she's noticed an inordinate focus on Clinton's appearance. "I feel like the media critiques her image, the way she dresses, the way she does her hair," she says.

Cox says she's tired of hearing Clinton referred to as "shrill." Clinton talks loudly, she says, but "she's not speaking in any different volume than Bernie Sanders or any of the men who run for president."

Clinton herself has alluded to this: "Sometimes when a woman speaks out, some people think it's shouting," she said last October.

"We can see how Bernie Sanders wags his finger at her and says 'Wait your turn' when she's in a debate with him," Sundgrenz says. "It's very patriarchal."

CLINTONITES AND BERNERS

Bernie Sanders, Clinton's opponent for the Democratic nomination, has seen his campaign take off since announcing his candidacy last May.

Earlier this year, *EW* covered the fervor of local Berners ("Feel the Bern," Feb. 18), who meet weekly and back their candidate with passionate flair.

Clinton has a solid following in Lane County, her supporters say, but the volume of enthusiasm isn't blasted as loudly.

"It's a quieter constituency, as inevitably it is when you have somebody who's been around and has a reputation as a compromiser and a moderate leader as opposed to an idealist," Wilde says. "I worry that the electorate always seems to get led down the garden path by big talkers."

For the most part, backers of Clinton like Sanders and his ideas, but they think his ambition lies outside the realm of reality.

"There are things I might agree with in principle that are politically impossible," Wilde explains. "Lots of politicians like to bluster and say they're going to break up the banks and things like that, but it's not really that simple."

Sundgrenz says she also agrees with much of the Sanders campaign and what it stands for, but she questions his ability to work with Congress to pass bills. She points to previous debates, where she says Sanders has shown his lack of knowledge on foreign policy.

"I feel that the Bernie campaign is instrumental in bringing people out to vote and care about issues," Sundgrenz says, "but Hillary Clinton has the leadership, and she knows how things work."

Cox says that Sanders' presence in the race has strengthened Clinton as a candidate, although in her view, his history as a socialist doesn't match up with the perspective of the Democratic Party.

She recalls a debate between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama during the 2008 election cycle. Obama talked about his plans to close Guantanamo immediately, Cox says, and Clinton answered with a more measured response.

"She knew that you couldn't just say all those things to get in," Cox says. "She's only promising what she believes she can actually produce. I don't see that from Bernie Sanders."

HILLARY FOR LANE COUNTY

Locally, Democrats for Clinton continue to rally the troops to help her win the nomination.

Sundgrenz says local Clinton supporters hosted a number of house parties last year to kick off the campaign and get to know each other. They stay in touch through Facebook, she says, where they also coordinate virtual campaign phone banking. With Oregon's primary still far away, Sundgrenz says one way that locals can help out the Clinton campaign is to chat with voters in states with upcoming primaries.

Bellisario, a member of the group UO for Hillary, says that a coalition of around 70 UO students have assembled online, and they plan to start meeting regularly when spring term starts.

They're gearing up efforts to hand out literature and interact with voters on campus, Bellisario says.

There's no official word of Hillary Clinton making a campaign visit to Oregon yet, but she spent March 22 in Seattle, and Bill Clinton stopped by Vancouver on March 21 to campaign for his wife — in a surprise move, he swung by Powell's Books in Portland, where Gov. Kate Brown gave him a tour and endorsed Hillary Clinton for president.

Washington's Democratic caucus takes place on March 26.

"We're at the genesis of it all," Cox says. "Since Oregon's primary is so late, there's often the notion that it doesn't matter, but I think that we're organizing now to say it does matter." ■

