

# LOCAL DELEGATES PREPARE FOR DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION

Delegates from Lane County are preparing to head to the Democratic National Convention July 25-28 in Philadelphia, where the party will officially nominate its presidential and vice presidential candidates for the 2016 election. It is also where the Democratic Party adopts its official platform.

According to the Democratic Party of Oregon's website, "Senator Sanders has earned 36 of Oregon's 61 elected delegates to the Democratic National Convention. Sec. Clinton has earned 25 delegates."

Delegates are elected or appointed at the local or state level to represent the state's voters at a national level. Each delegate is legally bound to support their particular candidate at the national convention, and the candidates acquire delegates based on the proportion of votes they receive in every state.

One of the delegates for Bernie Sanders is University of Oregon student Corinne Ellis. This will be Ellis' first convention. "It's still a little bit surreal because not a lot of 22-year-olds get to do this," Ellis says. "I saw it as an opportunity to make my voice heard ... I feel like students are consistently excluded from the political process, and Bernie Sanders was inspiring about getting young people involved."

She says her greatest interest is Sanders' idea of affordable higher education. "I think in order to have a well working democracy, education is vital," Ellis says. "I think his idea of tuition-free college is very idealistic, but I also think it's very attainable."

Matthew Keating, who introduced Bernie Sanders with a Shakespearean sonnet when Sanders campaigned in Springfield, is a political consultant and represents the more seasoned convention veteran. He is a delegate for Sanders and also serves on the board of higher education at Lane Community College. "From my point of view," Keating says, "tuition-free higher education is the key. Education, fundamentally, should be a right."

This will be Keating's third consecutive convention. He attended both conventions where President Barack Obama was nominated, and after this convention, he will have taken the train to each one.

"I'm a huge train supporter," Keating says. "It's less of a carbon footprint and is more cost effective." He adds, "It allows me to underscore the fact that the Democratic National Committee doesn't have an environmental caucus, and we should."

According to Keating, Oregon does have an environmental caucus with a progressive platform, but his goal is to create one nationally to allow for greater environmental awareness.

"I believe in the senator's platform," Keating tells EW. "This movement that Bernie has helped create is not going away, and we're going to continue to advocate, passionately, for real, serious reform that helps all Americans, not just the wealthiest few."

Julie Fahey is treasurer of the Democratic Party of Oregon who is a pledged delegate to Hillary Clinton. She is also a graduate of Emerge Oregon, which trains Democratic women to run for office. She is running for Oregon House District 14 in the Oregon State Legislature in the fall.

"I am very passionate about getting more women into office at the local level, at the state level and at the national level," Fahey says. She explains that there is a trickle-down effect when women hold high positions in offices where there are then more women holding positions in office at lower levels of government. She says she hopes that a greater effect will be created if Clinton is elected.

"There are different priorities when women are in office," Fahey says pointing to issues such as affordable childcare, equal pay and paid sick days, "things that dis-

proportionately affect women. Yes, male elected officials are in support of those things, but often times, it's women who are the real champions of them."

This will be Fahey's first convention, and she says she is excited that Emerge America is going to have a substantial presence at the convention this year. "I hope to be able to meet other Democrats from around the country," Fahey says. "I think it will be really great to get a chance to talk to other people about what's going on in their states."

Another delegate pledged to Clinton is Ryan Kounovsky, a graduate of the UO and campaign manager for Rep. Phil

Barnhart, Rep. John Lively and Rep. Nancy Nathanson. This is Kounovsky's first convention, and he says he hopes to be able to represent young people and Lane County well, as well as learn what programs are working in other states to get more democrats elected.

"I'm most excited about [Clinton's] way of bringing people into conversations that are going to bring change," Kounovsky

says. "I think she really wants to make a difference and she is open to doing that in whatever way is going to be best for all people."

He adds, "I'm really excited about her involvement in the LGBTQ community. I believe she also understands things going on in minority communities where people are being oppressed."

Kounovsky says, "There's still some tragic violence going on, and things need to be changed with the way we are treating all of the people in our country." ■

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— CORINNE ELLIS,  
DELEGATE FOR BERNIE SANDERS TO THE DNC

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