

MENTAL HEALTH PROGRESS

In the Oct. 6 edition of *EW*, local activist David Oaks claimed that legislation that I co-sponsored, along with 207 other members of the U.S. House of Representatives, would force “Americans living peacefully in their own homes” to take psychiatric drugs under court order. This is simply not factually accurate. The bill, H.R. 2646, includes language that supports assisted outpatient therapy (AOT) programs for those within the community who are found to be mentally unstable and unwilling to seek voluntarily treatment, posing a serious threat to themselves and others. AOT is usually in the form of case management and personal therapy programs and does not necessarily require medical intervention. As I hope Mr. Oaks is aware, Oregon law already authorized AOT and Oregon’s statute is clear: AOT does not include forced medication. H.R. 2646 passed the House with a bi-partisan vote of 422-2. This common sense legislation was a huge step forward in improving our mental health system, and I’m proud to be a co-sponsor.

Peter DeFazio
4th Congressional District Candidate
Eugene

VOTE FOR MCLEAN

When voting this year, I have two requirements for candidates. First, they must take a strong stance on working to mitigate and prepare for global warming. Second, they must also understand that restoring and preserving the forests here in Oregon is key. Our public forests are some of the best in the world for carbon sequestration, among many other ecosystem services they

provide. Fergus Mclean meets both of those requirements. He is running against Cedric Hayden who wants to increase logging our forests, the exact opposite direction we need to go. Please vote for a healthy future and vote for Mclean House District 7.

Pam Driscoll
Dexter

LOCAL BERNIE SANDERS GROUP ENDORSES EMILY SEMPLE

Supporters of Bernie Sanders have remained active in federal, state and local races around the country. Sanders has actively encouraged his large base of supporters to engage in local elections with the aim of electing meaningfully progressive candidates.

To this end, on Oct. 15, Our Revolution Lane County (ORLC, formerly Lane County for Bernie Sanders) voted unanimously to endorse Emily Semple for Eugene City Council.

In weeks prior to voting, ORLC hosted meetings with both Semple and her Ward 1 opponent, Joshua Skov. The candidates responded to question on the environment, sustainability, neighborhood protections, homelessness, gender and marriage equality.

ORLC members esteem Semple’s history of community activism, particularly around homelessness, and note her support among locally based environmentalists and from Eugene’s most progressive public officials: current Ward 1 Councilor George Brown, Ward 2 Councilor Betty Taylor and County Commissioner Pete Sorenson.

Our Revolution Lane County is proud

to endorse Emily Semple in recognition of her activism and enthusiasm to stand up and fight for and with we the people, for a better community, a welcoming city and a clean, sustainable world.

James Barber, Chair
Zondie Zinke
For Our Revolution Lane County

TRAIN DANGER

Another train derailment in Eugene. This happened recently — 13 cars and no human injuries — but still, it happened. One car did contain a hazardous chemical. *The Register-Guard* reported it, but apparently, no serious action was taken.

How much longer are we going to allow this to happen?

I thought legislation was in place to prevent this from occurring in any size city!

Sooner or later, a human life may be lost or a serious injury may result. Hopefully, this will never happen. Are we going to allow this to continue?

Stace Webb
Eugene

YES ON 97

Oregon is facing a \$1.35 billion shortfall next year. If we don’t do something about it now, we face lost services for seniors, schools and health care.

Already, the Oregon Health Plan fails to meet all clients’ needs. Already our seniors and disabled have a fraction of the services offered before Measures 5 and 50. Already our schools have the lowest graduation rates and among the largest class sizes in the country.

Yet corporations pay only a tiny share

of Oregon’s expenses, despite using our water, electricity and roads. The minimum they owe, regardless of a firm’s size, is only \$100,000! Is it fair that a company earning a whopping \$25 million effectively pays a less than one percent tax rate?

Meanwhile, solutions to our huge shortfall are either a sales tax, or higher property or income taxes. Take your pick.

Or vote for Measure 97. It only taxes 2.5 percent of income above \$25 million. It does not tax food, gas, electricity or medicine.

Forty-eight thousand nurses and Physicians for Social Responsibility support this. More than 80 economists and local farmers say 97 will actually benefit consumers. Hundreds of small businesses demand that mega-businesses pay their fair share, and neutral nonprofit groups like the League of Women Voters and the Oregon Center for Public Policy say it’s best for Oregon. Vote yes on 97.

Rachel Rich
Eugene

DON’T BLAME THE BUS

I was impressed with the elitism on display in Linda Wagner’s letter complaining about West 11th construction [Letters, 10/6]. Linda, your issue that road changes are not well-marked is probably accurate.

But your question as to whether all this will be worth it “for the four bus riders that use this route” is way off. When was the last time you rode the bus? When I drive, I really do love the almost complete convenience of going exactly where I want, efficiently, in my own audio and temperature controlled bubble. When I bus, sometimes I

VIEWPOINT BY ROBIN QUIRKE

Voting Problems

REDISTRIBUTING BALLOTS CAN AFFECT RESULTS

As Benton County prepares to vote on whether to adopt ranked-choice voting for county elections, Oregonians are presented an opportunity to explore different voting systems. Ranked-choice voting has the most political traction right now, but it’s only one of several alternatives.

Among voting authorities, there is a somewhat ideological battle over which voting system is most democratic. Although no system is perfect, two dominant viewpoints commonly emerge: those who favor evaluative voting (which includes both approval and range voting), and those who prefer ranked-choice voting.

Approval voting is similar to our current plurality voting system, but instead of choosing only one candidate, each voter may choose more than one. The candidate with the most approval votes wins. Both the American Statistical Association and the American Mathematical Association use this electoral system for their elections. It is more expressive than plurality voting, and it does not require new machines or software. On the other hand, approval voting does not require an absolute majority to elect a winner and it lacks political momentum.

Range voting gives voters the opportunity to rate each candidate on a scale, and the candidate with the highest mean score wins. Although mathematically respected, it has not gained political attention. Some Olympic sports and academic tests use range voting. It offers voters a very high level of expressivity, but information costs can be high (rating more than one candidate requires more informed voters), and it sometimes requires new machines and/or software.

Ranked-choice voting, the method Benton County may approve next month, is more expressive than plurality and approval voting because a voter is given the opportunity to rank candidates in order of preference, but less sophisticated voters may be marginalized if they don’t understand how the winners are calculated.

Additionally, ranked choice can create a false majority (e.g., third-ranked choices can get redistributed as first ranked choices; many ballots become redistributed or disqualified, so often an absolute majority is not achievable), manual recount and verification is difficult, information costs can be high (ranking more than one candidate requires more voter knowledge), and it sometimes requires new machines and/or software.

To make informed choices, voters need to understand how the redistributing of ballots can affect the results. Sometimes it is more strategically savvy to rank one’s second preferred candidate lowest. For example, if I prefer the leading Democrat to win, it would be beneficial for me to rank that person as my first choice and rank any left-wing third party candidates lowest in the hope of the third party candidates’ votes being redistributed to the leading Democrat’s total count.

For most Americans, voting is the only means through which they exercise civic power; therefore, it seems crucial for lawmakers and voters to take time to research the pros and cons when considering voting system alternatives (goo.gl/P24q0U).

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