

WILDE, WILDE COUNTRY

Democratic candidate Marty Wilde makes the case for a seat in Salem

When Marty Wilde knocks on the doors of manufactured homes, he says they remind him of the communities he grew up in. Meeting with people in these communities, which include a 97-year-old Korean War veteran struggling to pay rent on a fixed income, reinforces the idea that a lot of work remains to be done.

Wilde, executive director of Lane County Medical Society and a colonel in the Oregon Air National Guard, is running for House District 11 seat against Mark Herbert. The two men are fighting for outgoing state Rep. Phil Barnhart's seat.

The race has raised a lot of money and drawn attack ads against Wilde. But with a career of military service, three graduate degrees and a passion for finding answers to legislative problems, Wilde is making the case that he's the right choice.

Barnhart, who's stepping down after 17 years in Salem, told *Eugene Weekly* that it's a tough district because it wasn't drawn to favor one party of voters — meaning it's not gerrymandered.

Wilde agrees.

The district runs from Creswell nearly to Lebanon. Wilde says residents' professions range from professors to people who work in the timber industry.

"It's interesting to consider representing a district as diverse as this one. It's sort of the state in a nutshell in terms of the different communities," he says. "It's a district that cries out for someone who wants to be involved with collaborative work."

Collaboration is necessary for dealing with corporate taxes, Wilde says.

He plans to reach across party lines to see how the business community could work with tax reform since corporate taxes bring in about one-third of the revenue they used to. By working with Republicans, he says, you can learn how the Oregon tax rate must compete nationwide to attract and keep businesses from moving or going out of business.

Wilde doesn't usually side with the Trump administration, but he agrees a tariff on softwood is helpful for implementing a sustainable forestry policy because it could encourage less clear-cutting — a benefit for the health of Oregon's forests.

Barnhart's departure means that Wilde and Herbert are battling it out without the benefit of name recognition, so money is pouring in to both campaigns. Sometimes, campaign money is more telling of candidates' ideology than which political party endorsed them.

As of press time, Herbert has received \$298,992, and Wilde has gotten \$388,808, according to the Oregon Secretary of State.

Wilde's average contribution is \$687. He's received substantial in-kind donations from the Democratic Party of Oregon and Future PAC, the campaign arm of the Oregon House Democrats. His highest cash contribution is from Oregon AFSCME, which has given Wilde \$17,700 since the campaign began.

Herbert's average contribution is much higher at \$2,299. The two highest contributors to his campaign are two political action committees: \$65,693 from Promote Oregon Leadership and \$49,200 from Community Action Network (CAN). The largest lump sum campaign contribution Herbert has received was \$35,000 from Oregon Forest Industries Council Political Action Committee.

If Wilde is elected, he'll be in Salem to vote on the Clean Energy Jobs bill, which would have Oregon adopt a climate policy to curb emissions while investing in sustainable industries and climate change-related precautions. The bill will be voted on months after the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report said the world has just 10 years to curb emissions or suffer unstoppable climate problems.

"The IPCC will hopefully spur people," Wilde says. "We're seeing how climate change is burning down the forest. If [the forest] is all burned down from climate change, nobody will be working in the forest."

Climate change is a reason to revise state forest practices, but Wilde's life experience also influences his forestry views.

Growing up, he had friends who died young after drinking from a spring contaminated by aerial spraying. Today, a friend from that same area has stage-3 bladder cancer, he says.

The epidemiology is simple, Wilde says.

That's why he wants to re-examine the place of aerial spraying.

"I used to rappel out of helicopters in the Army. There's no precision about what happens under an aircraft," he says, laughing.

Wilde began his military career with the Army National Guard, serving in the infantry. Before he shipped out for basic training, he says he applied for graduate programs. While away, he received a law school offer. He came back from basic training and says he thought, "This law school thing sounds interesting."

When he had report dates for U.S. Army Ranger School or Justice Advocate General Corps, he stuck with law. As a military lawyer, he prosecuted sexual assault and harassment cases. He helped get the first Air National Guard JAG to staff its Special Victims Counsel Program, which gives sexual assault and harassment victims access to their own lawyers, and wrote a plan for the program's future.

He says he learned that if you empower victims and let their voices be heard, you not only create justice but the victim remains loyal to the organization.

If elected to the Legislature, he says he wants to pass internal standards. It could apply in cases like that of state Sen. Jeff Kruse, who was accused of sexual harassment on the job. The Legislature needs to have a system that brings about prompt, thorough investigation and timely adjudication of the allegation, he says.

"Quite frankly, that's what every employer should seek: a fair, accurate system," he adds.

Community Action Network, mostly funded by local natural resource extraction companies in Lane County, has targeted Wilde through TV and radio ads, using misleading information on his service history and drawing on one particular case, ironically involving allegations of sexual assault.

The attack ad claims Wilde mishandled an investigation into an alleged sexual assault on an Oregon National Guard sergeant by a National Guard doctor. It didn't result in a criminal investigation, which is what CAN says compromises Wilde's ability to lead in Salem.

CAN's ad lies, according to the victim's civilian lawyer Joel Shapiro. Wilde handled the case appropriately. The ad not only lies, Shapiro alleges, but violates the victim's confidentiality by identifying her without her consent.

Herbert tells *EW* he hasn't seen the ad — although it's listed as an in-kind contribution to his campaign — and says he asked CAN to stop airing the ad that named the victim. Even though the victim's lawyer has said the ad is false and misleading, Herbert says he will continue to accept CAN's contributions.

When asked why CAN supports him, Herbert says he isn't sure but it's probably because he's more aligned with the business interests of CAN than Wilde is.

Wilde served in Afghanistan, where he assisted in reconstructing its justice system. He says it was quite a responsibility to be in charge of that task because if he weren't successful, it would be his friends that would have to bear the consequences while they were in the country.

Wilde was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for his service defending human rights in Afghanistan. What he says he learned during his time in Afghanistan is the importance of doing your job well for the next person in line.

And, he jokes, his military experience translates well to Salem, because both places are afflicted by warring tribes. ■

EW'S ELECTION ENDORSEMENTS

Congress

HOUSE 2ND DISTRICT

Jamie McLeod-Skinner

HOUSE 4TH DISTRICT

Peter DeFazio

State Government

GOVERNOR

Kate Brown

STATE LEGISLATURE HOUSE

7th District **Christy Inskip**

8th District **Paul R. Holvey**

9th District **Caddy McKeown**

11th District **Marty Wilde**

12th District **John Lively**

13th District **Nancy Nathanson**

14th District **Julie Fahey**

SENATE

4th District **Floyd Prozanski**

6th District **Lee L. Beyer**

7th District **James I. Manning Jr.**

Statewide Measures

MEASURE 102 Amends Constitution: Allows local bonds for financing affordable housing with nongovernmental entities. Requires voter approval, annual audits. **Yes.**

MEASURE 103 Amends Constitution: Prohibits taxes/fees based on transactions for "groceries" (defined) enacted or amended after September 2017. **No.**

MEASURE 104 Amends Constitution: Expands (beyond taxes) application of requirement that three-fifths legislative majority approve bills raising revenue. **No.**

MEASURE 105 Repeals law limiting use of state/local law enforcement resources to enforce federal immigration laws. **No.**

MEASURE 106 Amends Constitution: Prohibits spending "public funds" (defined) directly/indirectly for "abortion" (defined); exceptions; reduces abortion access. **No.**

Lane County

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

East Commissioner, Position 5 **Heather Buch**

Local Measures

20-290 Lane County: Amends Charter, adopts Score Then Automatic Runoff voting for elections. **Yes.**

20-292 River Road Park & Recreation District: Five-year renewal of local option tax to maintain general operations. **Yes.**

20-296 City of Springfield: Authorizes general obligation bond to fix Springfield streets. **Yes.**

20-297 Eugene School District 4J: Bonds to construct, improve school facilities, address safety, overcrowding. **Yes.**