

We can disagree on immigration policy. But if a political party cannot draw the line at this kind of behavior, it is no wonder they continue to fail at the ballot box in Lane County. This is not what leadership looks like, and voters know it.

Chris Wig
Springfield

Color Me Unconvinced

Doyle Srader raises the issue: Do mass protests work (*EW*, 6/26)? Srader claims they worked in the past, but times have changed. “Inventing solutions that foster hope” is needed, he says. This reader is left unconvinced and uncomfortable for the lack of concrete proposals.

MAGA solutions to foster hopes: lies or deceptions focused on scapegoating minorities and inventing enemies. Bringing back manufacturing jobs to the U.S. in this globalized world? Tooth fairy stuff? If Trump voters are not “stupid or damaged

or racists,” exactly for what good reasons do they trust him as a savior? What promises do they hope would change their lives for the better? The price of “groceries,” or a spectacular crackdown on immigrant “criminals” swarming the border? Or retribution on “weaponized justice” and bourgeois wokeness?

To foster hope on the other side, the DNC might show it learned something on how stupid it was to bet on a failing-aged politician, once the blue collar guy, who reassuringly proclaimed “I am a capitalist and a Zionist” and under pressure stepped aside too late for a younger candidate.

Marco Elliott
Eugene

Keep Marching

Concerning Doyle Srader’s viewpoint “On Protests” in *EW*’s June 26 edition, I would remind our citizens of one significant reason to continue assembling, marching,

raising our voices, and yes, hoisting cardboard signs: Continued silence constitutes complicity. Speak up, speak loud, effect change!

W. C. Crutchfield
Eugene

Music for Boomers

My thanks for the recent change to a separate music listing area and showing the names of the venues in **BOLD FACE**. This really helps us older folks. Eugene has so much great music to offer we don’t want to miss a bit. Well done!

Ted Ledgard
Eugene

Protests Create Hope

I would like to offer a counter voice to the recent viewpoint “On Protests” (*EW*, 6/26). Mass mobilizations like protests are an integral part of a successful social and cultural change roadmap. They alleviate

feelings of helplessness and often serve as catalysts to inspire people to take action.

But more importantly, they help to normalize the message. For a movement to gain traction, it requires mainstream support. Journalists’ coverage, social media content and neighbors’ discussions help disseminate the message broadly in the public sphere. The writer’s suggestion was “inventing solutions that foster hope.” To me, nothing says hope like 10,000 people taking to the streets in a common cause. Don’t let naysayers discourage you. Get out, stand up and engage in nonviolent resistance.

Hope Bohanec
Eugene

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Local & Vocal

Viewpoint by Dawn Lesley

PROMOTING UNITY IN THE CAUSE OF LOVE

Political action and the progressive purity test

Watching the shredding of our constitutional democracy in a massive wealth grab by the wealthy who somehow never feel wealthy enough, watching the erosion of civil and human rights, watching the window of our opportunity to avert the worst climate disasters rapidly closing, we can act on many levels to take care of each other and shift course.

I want to discuss political action, and a plea for courage, deep listening and strategic thinking.

The majority of Americans are deeply uncomfortable with our current political direction, but we lack leadership, and as John Pavlovitz correctly called it, “While the Right is devouring America, the Left is eating its own.”

I am not a Lane County commissioner. Some may recall that I gave it a good try, twice. My best chance of success was in 2014, when a first-term, far-right conservative had overstepped bounds of ethics and decency and had earned the animosity of a wide, bipartisan swath of our good people. Some may recall that on the morning after the election, *The Register-Guard* trumpeted “Lesley Wins!” because at the time of the newspaper’s printing I had. But in the end,

the last votes trickling in put me 77 votes short of beating him outright, and only 17 votes shy of triggering a fall runoff.

Let me reveal openly what was only visible to those of us inside the campaign at the time — I was relentlessly challenged by prominent members of the local leftist community, for not being “progressive enough.” I was running to represent West Lane, a large district stretching from northwest Eugene to Florence and including Junction City, Veneta, Mapleton and the rural area in between.

I had bipartisan support in all those communities because I listened, built relationships, learned about the needs and priorities of this district and created plans to improve water quality, support young people’s ability to live and work here, protect agricultural and forest land, promote affordable housing and green energy, and support many other human needs that transcend party politics.

I am not a Lane County commissioner right now, not because the conservatives opposed me for being too progressive, but because I failed the “Progressive Purity Test” that is applied to all of our candidates and is costing us election after election locally and nationally.

At the same time, self-described “moderates” savage progressives from Bernie Sanders to AOC to New York Rep. Zohran Mamdani, fearing their “socialism” or their support for marginalized people goes too far, or labeling any criticism of the Israeli government’s aggression in Gaza as “antisemitic.”

When caring people refuse to recognize our commonality and work together, when progressive Oregon Congresswoman Val Hoyle is attacked by far-left activists for refusing to support performative, doomed virtue-signaling bills and Mamdani, also a mayoral candidate, is attacked by centrist Democrats for criticizing Israel aggression in Gaza (since when does the mayor of New York City participate in foreign policy decision-making?), the resulting fragmentation hands election after election to the ever-farther-right GOP.

It is catastrophically unstrategic to require that every candidate check every box in an interminable laundry list of progressive or moderate ideals in order to avoid destruction by a progressive or moderate firing squad. Our inability to work together from the center to the left is how we ended up here, excluded from power despite our overwhelming majority

nationwide. In handing over our power by refusing to work together, we are handing over civil rights, human rights, Democracy itself, and the chance to avert the utter devastation of the ecosystems on which life depends.

Diversity of experience and opinion is our strength as caring people. I would like to believe that we can find a way to work together. Good politics are built on trusted relationships that take time, homework, listening and examination of the totality of a leader’s record.

Hoyle has a long history of protecting workers’ and women’s and immigrants’ rights and promoting green energy. Mamdani is on record clearly and repeatedly condemning the October 7 attacks and his mayoral platform includes a plan to prevent anti-Jewish violence. These are simply two current examples, and I add my lived experience as a third.

If we continue to attack each other on single votes or comments taken out of context, if we ignore the “purple” nature of districts and the need for candidates to win votes from a broad range of voters, we will continue to disenfranchise voters and give away our power. I implore folks to take the time and do the work to understand the values from which our leaders govern. We must build trust and unity into the unstoppable, big-tent, diverse coalition we will need to rescue victory from the jaws of looming defeat.

Dawn Lesley is a professional environmental engineer based in Oregon for 30+ years.



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