

## Congress

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Rural life has always suited Cass, who spent time at a family home in Jordan Valley. The smell of the sagebrush and juniper trees remind her of home and her childhood. McLeod-Skinner said she too appreciates the “independence and interdependence” that is required of life in rural communities, which is part of her political philosophy as well.

The couple have strong ties to Central Oregon. McLeod-Skinner’s mother lives in Bend and Cass’s parents live in Redmond. They made the move to the ranch property in 2019, before redistricting put new lines on the map and created a district that gave McLeod-Skinner an opening.

“A lot of folks in Central Oregon haven’t felt like there’s been someone who really gets Central Oregon,” she said.

A political future McLeod-Skinner, 55, is no stranger to Oregon politics, having lost two high-profile races in previous elections.

In 2018, she won 39 percent of the vote in a long shot bid to unseat Greg Walden in the heavily-Republican 2nd Congressional District, which included most of eastern and southern Oregon. She garnered press coverage for driving 35,000 miles during the campaign, towing her teardrop trailer and often sleeping overnight in the state’s most far flung locales. Two years after that defeat, she finished third in the Democratic primary for secretary of state.

McLeod-Skinner said she didn’t move to Central Oregon with a political ambition. She says she only thought about running for Congress after the new district was drawn and potential constituents told her she could be a better fit for it than its official incumbent, fellow Democrat Kurt Schrader, who lives in the Portland suburb of Canby.

After studying the lines and her prospects, she decided to dive in. She says the 5th District, with its wide swath of issues, people and places, is the kind of district she has always wanted to represent. It includes both Redmond and Bend and much of Deschutes County, crosses the Cascades and includes parts of the eastern Willamette Valley all the way up to the suburbs south of Portland.

“What I love about it is that it’s got red, blue and purple areas,” said McLeod-Skinner. “It’s one of the most



**ABOVE:** Jamie McLeod-Skinner, left, and her wife Cass McLeod-Skinner work on moving hay for their goats at Crooked River Ranch on Oct. 13.

**LEFT:** Jamie and Cass McLeod-Skinner sit on the front porch of their home in Crooked River Ranch on Thursday, Oct. 13, 2022.

Ryan Brennecke/  
The Bulletin photos

evenly drawn districts in the country?”

In an upset, she defeated Schrader, who was endorsed by President Joe Biden, in the primary and is now locked in a close general election battle with Republican Lori Chavez-DeRemer of Happy Valley.

But the tight race is part of what excites McLeod-Skinner. She says she enjoys talking politics with people who disagree with her, and said that breaking out of her “bubble” is crucial to

having productive debate.

“We’re not having a complete conversation if we’re not having those different ideas,” said McLeod-Skinner.

### DECLINE OF THE RURAL DEMOCRAT

The Democratic Party has gone through lean times in Oregon political history, though up until the 1970s they were often just as likely to come from rural areas as populated, urban parts of the state. The heavily-unionized tim-

ber industry provided reliable votes for Democratic candidates and many rural residents relied on government programs and investment often supported by Democrats.

According to Jim Moore, director of the Tom McCall Center for Civic Engagement at Pacific University, that changed in the 1970s and accelerated in the 1980s with the collapse of the timber industry, Reaganism and the burgeoning environmental movement.

*“A lot of folks in Central Oregon haven’t felt like there’s been someone who really gets Central Oregon.”*

— Jamie McLeod-Skinner, a Democrat who’s running for Congress

Gerrymandering hasn’t helped either. In Oregon, nearly all rural voters have been herded into the massive 2nd District, but are heavily outnumbered in the others.

Even the 5th District was drawn by Democrats to connect the Portland suburbs with growing metropolitan centers in Central Oregon.

“It was designed to link cities, not really to pay attention to what is between them” said Moore.

Often, that means that the rural voters are so outnumbered that representatives don’t need to earn their votes or champion their causes in Washington.

Even Chavez-DeRemer, who lives in Clackamas County, just outside of Portland, has focused mostly on suburban issues during the campaign.

McLeod-Skinner has tried to pick up votes in places where Democrats have seen their support erode in recent decades, but Moore says that is an uphill battle.

“She lives the ideal of many liberal city dwellers: Grow your own vegetables and be part of a CSA,” said Moore, referring to community-supported agriculture. “It’s not threatening to urban voters, but I’m not sure how it will attract rural voters.”

In a year when national Republicans are spending big on congressional races, McLeod-Skinner has more than kept pace. She’s raised \$2.72 million to \$1.89 million for Chavez-DeRemer.

Moore is interested in how the election will turn out. He believes Chavez-DeRemer is not a strong candidate given the make-up of voters in the district. But the economic realities in 2022 has turned a lot of Americans off the controlling party in races across the state. If the ‘red wave’ reaches high enough, even blue-hued Democratic-leaning parts of Oregon could change color.

“I love the 5th (District),” said Moore. “Can’t wait to see how it votes.”

■ Reporter: ttrainor@redmondspokesman.com



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**What matters to you?  
Your family, your kids?  
To protect them  
VOTE !**

**Your health, your job?  
Your security, your future?  
To improve them  
VOTE !**

**Your community, your  
friends and neighbors?  
To strengthen and  
help them  
VOTE !**

**¿Qué te importa?  
¿Tu familia, tus hijos?  
Para protegerlos  
¡VOTA!**

**¿Tu salud, tu trabajo?  
¿Tu seguridad, tu futuro?  
Para mejorarlos  
¡VOTA!**

**¿Tu comunidad?  
¿Tus vecinos y amigos?  
Para fortalecerlos  
Para ayudarlos  
¡VOTA!**

### Our Slate for 2022

US Senate:  
**Ron Wyden**

US House of Representatives CD5:  
**Jamie McLeod-Skinner**

Oregon Governor:  
**Tina Kotek**

BOLI Commissioner:  
**Christina Stephenson**

OR House District 53:  
**Emerson Levy**

OR House District 54:  
**Jason Kropf**

OR House District 55:  
**Brian Lepore**

Deschutes County Commission, Position 1:  
**Oliver Tatom**

Deschutes County Commission, Position 3:  
**Morgan Schmidt**

Sisters City Council:  
**Susan Cobb**  
**Sarah McDougall**  
**Gary Ross**

Redmond Mayor:  
**Ed Fitch**

Redmond City Council:  
**Bill Trumble**  
**John Nielsen**  
**Kathryn Osborne**

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## ★★★★★ 4 Mayor of Redmond

**Friends of Jay Patrick urged him to take his nearly 24 years’ experience on the Redmond City Council a further step when Mayor Endicott announced he would not seek reelection. Jay should be your choice.**

**Almost a lifelong Redmond resident, Jay has overcome two surgeries as a youth. The rare dystonia may have impacted his speaking eloquence, but not his passion for Redmond where his daughter and his grandchildren live. He is a good listener and values your opinions and input.**

**“Let’s keep Redmond, Redmond,” he repeatedly reminds constituents. Jay Patrick is proud of the city’s accomplishments often with local, state and regional partnerships. His core priorities are:**

**\* Police Safety \*Safe Schools \*Clean Water \* Economic Development  
\* Infrastructure \*Sewer \*Airport Terminal \* Stewardship \*Planning**


**Redmond is unique in two big ways that enhance our livability: The city’s airport gives us immediate connections to major cities through-out the west and beyond. Our fairgrounds attract entertainment and commerce from much farther than Central Oregon.**

**Jay Patrick has the knowledge, the experience and the fiscal responsibility to keep us going in the right direction -- undeterred by programs Redmond can’t afford - as we accommodate our rapid growth. He has been involved in building the Maple Street Bridge, the new Historic City Hall, Centennial Park, Highway 97 Bypass, Hope Playground, the current airport terminal and the Deschutes County Fairgrounds. These projects have fostered relationships and insights on how to approach future projects to ensure the best outcomes.**

**Let’s move Redmond into the future together.**

## Elect Jay Patrick 4 Mayor

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