

# SCHRADER,

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which includes almost 900,00 people from the counties of Clackamas, Marion, Polk and parts of four others. He returns home this month for the House of Representatives' August recess, which is most often used for district work.

Schrader and his wife Susan, who usually fly home, decided to try a new mode of transportation for this trip: riding their horses from D.C. to Oregon.

"It was a once in a lifetime trip with the woman I love, doing the thing I love, across the country I love," Schrader said.

Unfortunately, Schrader decided not to arrive at the *Keizertimes* office on horseback. But he did sit down for an hour-long interview to talk about some of the state's most critical topics.

### **Schrader and eight other Democrats rebel against party**

The *Keizertimes* isn't the first to feature Congressman Schrader in the news this month - Congress is currently trying to pass two bills that total \$4.5 trillion in spending.

One of those bills, a trillion dollar infrastructure package, has bipartisan support.

Schrader was a major contributor in the writing of the infrastructure bill, which would go towards rebuilding the nation's roads and bridges and would expand rural internet access.

As far as how the bill would influence the 5th District, Schrader said it would create more jobs while also making sure "that our infrastructure is in place so that those very same businesses can continue in operation and compete worldwide."

But the infrastructure bill isn't why Schrader has been the center of attention in D.C. this month. Democrats want to use the bipartisan infrastructure bill to pass a partisan \$3.5 trillion social spending bill that is expected to expand Medicare, provide free community college and universal preschool, and include a broad program to address climate change. By linking the bills together, and using a process called reconciliation, Democrats had the votes to pass the partisan bill.

But Schrader and eight other moderate House Democrats broke ranks and refused to vote for the social spending bill until the infrastructure bill was passed.

"With Afghanistan and the COVID surge, we need something where it shows everybody - here in Keizer, Salem, the rest of the district - that



Rep. Kurt Schrader and Keizer Fire Chief Jeff Cowan during a 2019 visit to the Keizer fire station. FILE PHOTO, *Keizertimes*

we can work together," Schrader said. "I did not want (the infrastructure bill) put with a bunch of other things in the House so that Republicans couldn't vote for that."

The coalition of nine moderate Democrats eventually struck a deal with Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi and voted along party lines to move the social spending bill forward in return for a Sept. 27 vote on the infrastructure bill.

Schrader's main issue with the social spending bill is that he doesn't believe the country has that money to spend after the past 18 months.

"These are good programs, but we don't have the money and this country can't afford that right now. That's the sad, ugly truth. People don't want to admit that," Schrader said. "And there's no leadership. Zero in Washington."

Taxes are one way to reduce the federal debt that is approaching \$29 trillion, Schrader said, adding that his Republican colleagues refused to add tax increases to the infrastructure bill.

The social spending bill, on the other hand, proposes tax increases on corporations and those making over \$400,000 a year. With a majority in the Senate, Democrats could pass these tax increases without Republican support - which Schrader doesn't agree with.

"Congress was established to work out our beliefs and I don't subscribe to the belief that just because Congress can't, quote, 'Get its act together' means a president or a one party should impose its will on the other," said Schrader. "I'd argue that if there is no ability to get to a yes, it means we're not working hard enough."

### **Oregon prepares for redistricting**

Oregon is poised to gain a sixth seat in the House of Representatives after population gains in the 2020 Census.

With a new seat up for grabs in Oregon, the next month might be contentious as lawmakers attempt to redraw congressional district lines to benefit their party. The Oregon Legislature will have until Sept. 27 to create new state and congressional maps.

"I thank the Fifth (District) because it's so diverse geographically, socioeconomically, politically. It's a great district to represent. I'm afraid it's going to change dramatically because this is on the edge of where all the population growth is," Schrader said.

In the 2020 congressional race, Schrader lost to his Republican opponent in two of the three counties with the most votes. Schrader won the race primarily because of Clackamas County, which he won by a 15% margin.

With population gains coming primarily from the Portland area, a new district could likely incorporate part of Clackamas County - cutting into Schrader's advantage.


"It'll be interesting. I mean, my little old political career may hang in the balance so it's a lot more than interesting, potentially," said Schrader.

Initially, Democrats held the power in drawing maps with three Democrats and two Republicans making up the redistricting committee. That was until Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek


Here's my little saying:  
 freedom or liberty  
 without responsibility —  
 that's anarchy. That's  
 just every man or  
 woman for themselves.  
 To hell with my  
 neighbor. I don't care  
 if you get sick.

— REP. KURT SCHRADER

Schrader said he first wants to vote on a standalone infrastructure bill, then "figure out all this other stuff that Democrats want to spend a bunch of money on - (money) that we don't have by the way."




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