

Todd to run for Marion County DA, will be first contested DA race in decades



Criminal defense attorney Spencer Todd will be running for district attorney in 2022.

Submitted photo

By **JOEY CAPPELLETTI**
Of the *Keizertimes*

Spencer Todd announced last week that he would challenge District Attorney Paige Clarkson in the 2022 election, making it the first time since at least 1988 that there will be a contested district attorney race.

Todd, born and raised in Salem and now a criminal defense attorney, said the ability to give voters a choice for such an important position influenced his decision to run.

“The amount of power that the DA has is actually shocking in terms of basically being the final arbiter on who gets charged with what crime and who doesn’t get charged with what crime,”

said Todd. “And so a big part of it for me was I think that voters, and everybody in Marion County, deserves two options instead of just a simple, this is the way it is.”

The current district attorney, Paige Clarkson, was elected in 2018 and appointed by previous District Attorney Walt Beglau who had served since 2002.

The job of a district attorney and their office, among other things, can be to determine whether criminal charges are brought to court, which cases are dismissed or diverted from court, and often suggesting sentence lengths. District attorneys often run in uncontested races and support a replacement

when they are done.

Todd, whose parents are both attorneys, began his law career at 16 years old in the Marion County Courthouse — where he built shelves for the records department. From the “dusty” basement of the courthouse, Todd went on to graduate from law school at Willamette University and has worked for the past eight years as a criminal defense attorney in Marion and Polk counties.

Only eight years since graduating from law school, the jump from public defender to district attorney is quite the step up. But Todd said the current way of doing things isn’t working, and for change to happen, different opinions

need to be heard.

“The way we’re currently doing things doesn’t work. It wastes money and it doesn’t create the long-term solutions that we need,” said Todd. “We send more people to prison in our population than anywhere else in the world. It doesn’t work. We keep trying the same thing and so at some point we’ve got to try something different.”

One of Todd’s objectives if elected is to “stop sending people to prison for as long when that doesn’t translate to public safety.” Instead, he believes that money would be better spent dealing with the cause of issues, such as mental illness and drug addiction.

Todd also said the current prosecutors in the DA office are overworked due to, among other things, the fact that too many cases are taken to court that could be resolved other ways. In certain cases, Todd said, deals settled outside the courtroom are necessary for the larger picture.

“Sometimes a deal just needs to happen. It just does because it saves us a trial. We don’t have to put the victim through testifying. There are no appeals. It saves us the resources of the jury having to come in,” said Todd.

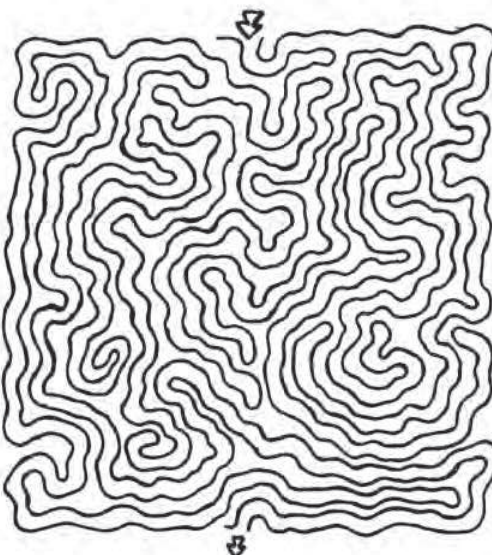
The Marion County District Attorney vote will take place during the primary election on May 17, 2022.

brainfood

sudoku

		2		3		5
1		3	7			
2	4	8				
5	2		1			6
	6					4
7			9	5		2
				4	6	9
			5	2		8
9	5		6			

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maze by Jonathan Graf of Keizer

Enter digits 1-9 into blank spaces. Every row must contain one of each digit. So must every column, & every 3x3 square.

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