

Electoral votes: ‘The Electoral College has made the voice of rural America count’

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Urban-rural divide

Under the proposed legislation, once states representing a majority of electoral votes join the compact, Oregon’s electors would be awarded to the candidate who wins the national popular vote.

The compact has been described as a “workaround” for the Constitution’s Electoral College system.

Proponents say the current system of states awarding electoral votes based on their state’s results does not honor the principle of “one person, one vote,” and distorts both how candidates campaign and presidents govern by shifting the focus to swing states.

Opponents, though, say the Constitution calls for the Electoral College in order to prevent “tyranny of the majority” and to give small states a voice in presidential elections.

Discourse about the so-called “urban-rural divide,” an issue in the wake of Trump’s strong support in non-urban areas, plays into the debate, as well.

Joseph Rice, chairman of the 2nd Congressional District for the Oregon GOP and a member of its executive committee, claimed the proposal would rob rural voters of their say in national elections.

“For hundreds of years the Electoral College has made the voice of rural America count,” Rice wrote in a letter to the House Rules Committee. “Pushing forward with (the proposal) silences the voices of (tens) of millions of Americans, giving urban America and our densely populated cities the overwhelming voice in our national elections.”

But Paul Finkelman, a visiting professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, has argued that the Electoral College had its roots not in states’ rights or fear of tyrants riding a wave of populist sentiment into office, but in an attempt to appease pro-slavery states.

By allowing slave-owning states to factor slaves into their population as “three-fifths” of a person — and in

denying slaves suffrage — those states could artificially inflate their populations to garner more representation in the Electoral College to outweigh their smaller voting-eligible populations, Finkelman has argued.

‘Outcomes have dictated philosophy’

House Minority Leader Mike McLane, R-Powell Butte, took issue with the popular vote proposal at Tuesday’s hearing, arguing that under the same premise, the country should do away with the U.S. Senate.

“I wonder if outcomes have dictated philosophy,” McLane said, suggesting that the recent election had stirred up Democratic interest in the cause.

Rayfield, one of three major sponsors, said he would support the national popular vote measure, even if American voters selected a Republican president.

“When the majority of the electors control who our president is, then the policies coming out of the most important office we have are going to match what the majority of the electors wanted,” Rayfield said. “And that’s why it doesn’t matter who wins the popular vote. I may be in the minority, but our democracy is founded on the majority principle.”

Similar proposals were passed by the House in 2009, 2013 and 2015, but stalled in the Senate all three times, according to National Popular Vote, an organization advocating for the change.

Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, said he’ll wait to see what happens in committee if it moves to the Senate.

“Personally, I believe Oregon’s electoral votes should be cast for the candidate chosen by Oregon voters,” Courtney said in a statement. “Under the national popular vote proposal, that would not be guaranteed.”

The measure has not yet been scheduled for a vote.

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

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Senate president

Kujala: Warrenton’s first elected mayor

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Kujala is Warrenton’s first elected mayor. Voters chose him for a four-year term in November 2014. Previously, mayors — including Kujala — were selected among fellow city commissioners for a one-year term. He had been appointed mayor in 2011, 2013 and 2014.

He said he has enjoyed working with his fellow commissioners and city staff. “I really, really have appreciated my time on the commission very much.”

The City Commission will decide how to fill the vacancy.

Personable and accessible to residents, Kujala had focused this term on jobs and economic development, public safety, urban renewal and levee certification. He also played a leading role in the dispute with the Skipanon Water Control District over control of the Eighth Street Dam.

The mayor presided over the city during the fractious debate over the Oregon LNG project. The energy company sought to build a liquefied natural gas terminal and pipeline on the Skipanon River but withdrew the proposal last year.

Station: Fire chief made an appeal

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Rating properties

Each of the proposed sites is either owned by the city or would be available to the city at a minimal cost.

Gearhart Park offers compacted sand for advantageous foundation and a higher elevation, geologist Tom Horning said. “The park site is a good site,” he said. “High enough, and it’s near enough town to provide great services.”

Disadvantages include loss of parkland and effects on neighboring homes.

A public safety building would take up “about half the park,” Sweet said.

“There’s obviously an aesthetic aspect that would be negative,” Speakman said.

The Trail’s End location offers a central location and the city already owns some of the land.

But low elevation and concerns from neighbors who hope to preserve that property could be downsides.

The current firehouse site, while built “fairly stoutly,” according to Horning, is likely to flood even in a moderate tsunami.

“If you’re going to relocate here, you’ll have upwards of 20 feet of water,” Horning said. “You can’t do anything with the equipment



The Daily Astorian/File Photo

Gearhart Fire Chief Bill Eddy outside the Gearhart Fire Station in July. He made an appeal Tuesday for a new station on behalf of the town’s volunteer firefighters.

because it will be inundated by the water. After the town is flooded there will be fires. They will break out, in a fire-place, natural gas line that sparks — and if you can’t use the local water to pump onto the fire, how will you put it out?”

Community need

Tuesday’s meeting ended without resolution, but the issue will now head to the City Council for discussion.

“The ultimate decision about this will be up to the

council,” Speakman said. “We have a new mayor, Matt Brown, who’s very passionate about this, and we all feel very confident that hopefully we can convince the population that even though this is going to be a costly venture, the time has come to upgrade our capabilities here so we can maintain a first-grade fire brigade. The need is not going away.”

Fire Chief Bill Eddy made an appeal for Gearhart’s volunteer firefighters.

“Everybody talks about the equipment in here,” Eddy said. “The biggest asset we have are the firefighters in our department. The amount of money that each one of these firefighters is worth dwarfs what these apparatus are worth. Part of the station is for them. They’re the ones that have to come here to drill, to respond. To have a facility that’s current and up-to-date when it comes to training and all the other aspects of it — it’s needed.”

Consult a Professional

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Q: Chronic pain
A: Painkillers and anti-inflammatories can get us through a tough time with back, neck, head or leg pain, but they weren’t designed for long-term use. Yearly deaths from pain medication are climbing. Other side effects can include constipation, liver and kidney damage; addiction from them is real and a growing problem. Pain is a signal that something is wrong. Pain medication does not fix the problem — it changes the brain. Reducing pain can be as simple as identifying its source and providing a different approach — chiropractic is an important part of that. “Maybe you don’t have to live with it.” Call **503-325-3311**.

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A: In Windows 10, click on the Windows Icon, and type “Mail” or click on the mail app in the Start Menu. Add your first email account and password. To add a second, third, etc. email address, click on the gear in the lower left side of the window. Click on “Manage Accounts” at the top right. Click on “Add Account” and enter your additional email addresses and passwords.

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Q: Will I have to assemble my furniture when it is delivered?
A: Most wood furniture products require assembly prior to delivery. **Our delivery service at Robby’s includes assembly of your furniture prior to delivery.** Our delivery service also includes complimentary removal of your old furniture if necessary.

Stefanie Cao
Medicare Market Manager
CareOregon Advantage
careoregonadvantage.org

Q: What’s the difference between Medicare Part A and Part B?
A: Part A is hospital insurance. It covers inpatient hospital stays and if you are discharged to a skilled nursing facility, some home health care, and hospice. Part A is free for those with a qualifying work history. Part B is medical insurance. It covers doctor visits, outpatient tests, services and some durable medical equipment. Part B has a monthly premium; Medicare sets the amount.

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Q: My garden is infested with moles. How do I get rid of them?
A: You are in good company! Moles are best controlled with traps and baits. We can show you how they work. Castor oil in spray or pellet form is a very good deterrent. Smoke bombs are also available with varying degrees of effectiveness as are various breeds of canines. Since moles are primarily carnivores, they do the most damage to the roots of plants by undermining them as they dig. On the brighter side, moles do a lot of good in the garden by eating crane fly larvae and aerating the soil.

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65 N. Hwy. 101 Suite 204 Warrenton 503-325-5722

Q: What is Respite Care?
A: Respite Services provide short-term relief for a person experiencing a mental health emergency. North Coast Crisis Respite Center is a newly opened sixteen bed facility in Warrenton offering an average length of stay from 3 to 7 days. Our program is staffed by mental health, nursing and psychiatric professionals to help develop safe plans for recovery. We work closely with local hospitals, law enforcement and other healthcare professionals to move people from crisis to care. For information regarding the referral process, call 503-325-5722.

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Q: What is the Birthstone for March?
A: Aquamarine. Perfect in Platinum. Irresistible in White Gold. The contrast of Aquamarine set in white gold is not only trendy but also captivating. Typically, Aquamarine is heat-treated for color purity. Most Aquamarine is mined in South America and Africa. Aquamarine is designated for the 25th Anniversary and symbolizes Courage & Joy.

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Q: What’s the best advice for me to keep my teeth healthy?
A: Seriously, this begins with you. In today’s dental world, fewer people are losing all their teeth. The very best advice is to be diligent, maybe even obsessive in your home-care brushing and flossing. Next, like it or not, see your dental hygienist frequently and your dentist regularly for dental checkups. You will be way ahead — cost-wise, time-wise and treatment-wise — by making routine dental care part of your life’s commitment. We look forward to seeing you.