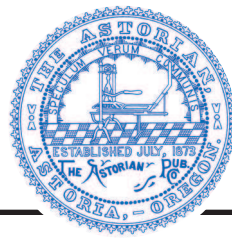


# OPINION



# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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## OUR VIEW

# Paulus leaves legacy of independence

**F**ormer Secretary of State Norma Paulus was a product of rural Oregon. She exemplified what individuals can do when given a chance — conquering poverty, polio and the lack of a college degree to emerge as one of Oregon's most influential politicians.

And Paulus did so during an era in which she typically was “The Only Woman in the Room,” the title of her autobiography.

Paulus died Feb. 28, two days after another Republican secretary of state, Dennis Richardson. U.S. Rep. Greg Walden and state Sen. Betsy Johnson remarked at Richardson's recent funeral that Paulus set the standard for her successors, regardless of political affiliation.

Both were strong, independent, transformative leaders, said Republican Walden, who represents Oregon's 2nd Congressional District.

Democrat Johnson added that Paulus and Richardson placed the needs of Oregon ahead of their own political party. “Norma blazed her own trail and was one tough cookie,” Johnson said.

Paulus would have turned 86 on March 13, but hers certainly was a life well-lived. She was the first woman elected to statewide office in Oregon and the last Republican secretary of state until Richardson.

Norma Jean Petersen was born during the Depression to a Nebraska farm family who eventually settled near Burns in Eastern Oregon, seeking a better life.

But the family's poverty kept her from attending college after graduating from Burns High



Statesman Journal/Timothy J. Gonzalez  
**Norma Paulus, then superintendent of public education, reads to children at the Salem Public Library in 1997.**

*AS HER OBITUARY SAID, ‘SHE LEAVES A LEGACY OF INDEPENDENCE, FIERCE RESPECT FOR THE INTEGRITY OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE ADVERSARIES OR EVEN FRIENDS IN STANDING UP FOR WHAT SHE THOUGHT RIGHT.’*

School at age 17. Instead, she became a secretary for the Harney County district attorney. Then polio struck and she endured weeks of treatment in an iron lung. After recovering, she moved to Salem, where she went to work as a legal secretary for Chief Justice Earl Latourette of the Oregon Supreme Court.

She so impressed Latourette

that he urged her to become a lawyer despite not being a college graduate. She studied part-time at the Willamette University law school while still working full-time at the Supreme Court and also being married with a young child. Her husband, Bill Paulus, whom she met at law school, eventually borrowed money from an uncle so she could quit her job

and be a full-time law student.

It was a productive investment. In 1962, Norma Paulus graduated from law school with honors. Her marriage to Bill lasted 40 years until his death in 1999. Although Bill stayed in the background politically, he was a well-regarded lawyer in his own right, known for his work with school districts.

A legislator before her election as secretary of state in 1976, Norma Paulus was fearless. She stood up to the followers of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, who tried to rig Wasco County elections by busing in homeless people to register as voters, and who contaminated salad bars in The Dalles to sicken other voters.

Later, as the state's elected superintendent of public instruction, Paulus took on teacher unions and others who questioned her vision for school reform.

All the while, she carried a deep affection for the vastness of her state, from the coast to the mountains and the rangelands of Eastern Oregon. Everywhere she went, people seemed to know her on a first-name basis.

Paulus lost the 1986 election for governor to Democrat Neil Goldschmidt, and the Oregon Republican Party soon moved on from the centrist approach she represented — fiscally conservative and socially liberal.

As her obituary said, “She leaves a legacy of independence, fierce respect for the integrity of democratic institutions and willingness to engage adversaries or even friends in standing up for what she thought right.”

Her rural values served all of Oregon.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### We need moderate voters

**D**emocrats need to keep one thing in mind, and that is they must defeat President Donald Trump in 2020 if they are going to keep the planet from becoming a disaster, keep our relationships around the world, and not have our children grow up thinking that is how a president speaks and acts.

I would love to see everybody in America have health care, but it is not going to happen overnight. We need to face reality, and only a moderate candidate advocating for incremental changes in health care is going to get elected. We need to do something, such as slowly expanding Obamacare, as we figure out how to pay for it. Some practical ideas on how to pay for it are get rid of the massive loopholes in our tax code, raise the capital gains tax to the same level as income tax, and increase the estate tax.

We need to show that we can add, subtract and not come up with ideas on how to finance our goals that sound as ridiculous and dishonest as “trickle down economics,” and the other Republican ideas that have increased the national debt to astronomical amounts.

There is already enough data and polls out there to indicate that almost one-third of the voting population are moderates, voting neither for the conservative or liberal agenda. Make no mistake — we need their votes.

JEAN HOOGE  
Astoria

### Undermining our democracy

**T**he influence of corporate campaign contributions and lobbying in Oregon is undermining our democracy — and overwhelming the will of voters. For example, a recent measure to stop the Jordan Cove Liquefied Natural Gas proposal in southern Oregon brought in \$1 million to successfully block the measure.

The good news is there's hope for all of us voters to restore decision-making in Salem that's good for all of us, not just for special-interest campaign donors. Several measures are proposed to unrig Oregon's

elections. One is the Small Donor Elections bill that would make small donors a stronger force in elections and reduce the need for candidates to rely on donations from special interests.

Another is House Bill 2709, which would help limit the secrecy of “dark money” enabled by Citizens United. Third is a proposed amendment to Oregon's Constitution in 2020 that would allow the state and other government entities to set limits on individual and corporate campaign contributions. I'm grateful to Clatsop Community College's Ales & Ideas program at the Lovell Showroom for hosting David Delk and Patrick Starnes on March 7 to talk about these critical issues. This monthly series continues to present excellent thought-provoking speakers about democracy and our communities.

I'm encouraged that area residents are also working to raise up the voices of everyday Oregonians in our elections and state government. Learn more about these proposals at honest-elections.com

Laurie Caplan  
Astoria

### Slippery slopes

**N**atalie St. John recently provided a well-written, compelling case for the public's right to know (“Records ordeal reveals conflicts about dealing with racism,” Chinook Observer, Feb. 19). She related her frustration at accessing Astoria Police Department documents.

Her investigative report concerned an Ocean Park, Washington resident who posted KKK-like flyers in Astoria, seeking to mobilize fellow homophobes and racists. St. John related how Astoria police officials were worried about the safety of the perpetrator, while initially declining to provide requested information.

That incident attracted my attention. As a nine-year Oregon resident, I was aware of information disclosure statutes, such as the 1973 public records law that identified 550-plus exemptions concerning what was deemed “sensitive information.” In 2017, the Oregon Legislature tripped all over themselves, issuing four public record laws in an effort to generate greater pub-

lic trust in state and local officials. However, I'm not sure the Oregon Sunshine Committee has provided enough clarification to prevent simple requests by St. John, and others, from becoming mired in obfuscation.

As a teacher of freedom of speech courses, American Civil Liberties Union member, and longtime advocate of the public's right to know, I fully understand the slippery slopes St. John had to traverse. She raised important questions about the First Amendment, the right to privacy, government transparency, investigative journalism, and just how much protection we citizens should allow for hate speech. She raised some tough questions without easy answers.

ROBERT BRAKE  
Ocean Park, Washington

### Thanks for support

**A**fter reading the letter to the editor “Don't support gillnetting” (The Daily Astorian, March 7), I'd like to remind readers that Measure 81 was voted out by all of Oregon, but was pushed through, anyway, by our governor.

Our community was built by gillnetters and loggers, and many families are still supported by these industries. There is factual proof in black and white that gillnetters are selective. Groups like the Coastal Conservation Association guide services and sport fishing groups want all the fish for themselves, while the gillnetting community wants to share with everybody.

It just shows the greed that surrounds us. The groups mentioned just keep coming up with new excuses every time one of their schemes is proven false. Where does it stop?

I applaud The Daily Astorian for supporting something that is very important to its community.

MARK HIPPENSTEEL  
Warrenton

### Thanks for reporting facts

**A**fter reading the letter “Don't support gillnetting” (The Daily Astorian,

March 7), I felt compelled to offer a factual response.

The author states that all the fish in the Columbia River main channel are Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed. Up to 80 percent of returning salmon stocks are now of hatchery origin, and not listed. They are marked by a clipped fin to be later identified.

Of the remaining 20 percent, there are healthy runs of wild fish, such as Hanford Reach fall chinook and summer chinook that can be harvested for public use. The gillnet is a very selective tool to accomplish this, and has a long track record of staying within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's stringent ESA requirements.

The statement that the Columbia River endorsement fee on recreational licenses was intended to buy out or eliminate gillnetters is simply false. The money has been used for overall projected improvements to fisheries, including researching new off-channel select fishing areas (none were found viable), testing alternative gear (none proved to be better than gillnets), research and monitoring commercial fisheries, additional hatchery production to benefit both recreational and commercial fisheries, and commercial and recreational fisheries law enforcement.

I am fairly confident most of the hard-working blue-collar commercial fishing families in the lower Columbia don't worry much about the economy in Vancouver, Washington, where the author lives, but they sure care about their own, and so does The Daily Astorian.

We thank our local paper for reporting the facts and supporting rural people and jobs. As far as the huge “transfer of wealth” from urban to rural, as promised under the Kitzhaber Plan, after six years we are still waiting for the trickle-down to develop.

The Columbia River Reform Plan is now going through an adaptive management process that was built into it as a path forward if the plan failed — and it has. For some people, that true fact is hard to accept.

JIM WELLS  
President, Salmon For All  
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