

Dems face off for Oregon secretary of state

By **PETER WONG**
Oregon Capital Bureau

For the seventh time since World War II — but for the first time ever in back-to-back election cycles — the race for Oregon secretary of state is wide open.

Three Democrats and two Republicans seek their party nominations for the state’s second-ranking office in the May 19 primary.

Democrats are Shemia Fagan of Happy Valley and Mark Hass of Beaverton, both state senators, and Jamie McLeod-Skinner of Terrebonne, the party’s 2018 nominee for the 2nd Congressional District seat.

Republicans are Kim Thatcher of Keizer, a state senator, and Dave Stauffer of Portland, an environmental inventor who lost primary bids for governor as a Democrat in 2016 and as a Republican in 2018.

Rich Vial of Scholls, a former Republican state representative and deputy secretary of state from April 2019 until Jan. 10, is making an independent bid for the office.

All seek to succeed Republican Bev Clarno, of Redmond, a former legislator appointed to the position when Republican Dennis Richardson died of cancer last year midway through his term.

The secretary of state is Oregon’s chief elections officer — working with officials in the 36 counties — who oversees audits of state agencies and other programs and sits on the State Land Board with the governor and state treasurer.

The secretary of state also is first in line of succession to the governorship. Oregon is one of five states without a lieutenant governor.

Below are short profiles of the three Democrats, one of whom will advance to the Nov. 3 general election.

Shemia Fagan

Fagan, 38, jumped into the race less than two weeks before the filing deadline — but after Jennifer Williamson of Portland, former House majority leader, dropped out because of news disclosures about campaign expenditures.

Fagan’s unseating of a Republican in 2012, after a two-year stint on the David Douglas School Board, was one of four metro-area victories that enabled Democrats to win back a majority in the Oregon House after a 30-30 tie the previous two years.

She left in 2016 after she gave birth for the second time, but returned two years later in a successful primary challenge to Democratic Sen. Rod Monroe, who opposed rent-control legislation. She was the floor manager for the law that passed both chambers in 2019.

“I believe he was not adhering to the values our community needed in addressing the housing crisis,” she said.

She also was the lone Democrat opposing Peter Courtney’s bid for a ninth two-year term as Senate president at the start of the 2019 session.

She now works for HKM Employment Attorneys.

Fagan said she would continue to be outspoken if she is elected secretary of state. She was critical of incumbent Bev Clarno’s low-key response to President Donald Trump’s dismissal of encouraging mail ballots in states during the coronavirus pandemic.

“I think we need a secretary of state who understands this is a leadership position, not just the head of an executive agency,” Fagan said.

“I am not partisan; I am principled. In this time we have a Republican Party platform led by the president ... that is pushing bogus ideas of voter fraud and voter suppression.”

She was among the sponsors of 2019 legislation that requires the state to pick up the postage for mail ballots — the May 19 primary is the first time it takes effect — and she said there should be a single date for when it is considered too late for voters to mail ballots.

Like Hass, Fagan would support an audit of how state government has responded to the coronavirus pandemic.

“It has to be so broad to make sure that it takes into account every corner of this state, people who are being underserved and under-represented,” she said. “We have to be ready for our next big crisis.”

Despite her late start, Fagan has raised



State Sen. Shemia Fagan

more money so far this year than her rivals, although Hass had more cash on hand because of fundraising in 2019. The bulk of it has come from the political action committees of the Oregon Education Association, (\$55,275, including noncash services), Local 503 of Service Employees International Union (\$50,275), Council 75 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (\$15,000) and the Oregon AFL-CIO (\$9,812).

She has been endorsed by former Gov. Barbara Roberts, also a former secretary of state.

She lives with her husband, Richard, and two children in Happy Valley.

Mark Hass

Hass, 64, was a news reporter for two decades — 16 years with Portland TV station KATU — until he was elected to the House in 2000, and after a brief break, appointed to the Senate in 2007. He is campaigning on his legislative experience and accomplishments.

“It’s one thing to be governing when everything is going well and the economy is breaking records. It’s another thing to try and govern in tough times, when things are terrible, the economy is collapsing and people are losing their jobs and homes,” he said. “I’ve gone through those times and experienced what that is like.”

He has sat on the House and Senate tax committees during his tenure, which covered the recessions of 2002 and 2007-10, and has led the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee since 2015. He spotlights his role in the creation of Oregon’s two main reserve funds, which now total just under \$3 billion.

“That is not going to be all we need to make up for this crashed economy,” he said. “But it will be a good cushion.”

He also was a leading advocate of full-day kindergarten in the state and the Oregon Promise for almost-free community college for high school graduates — both were funded in 2016 — as well as the Student Success Act last year. The latter is tied to a new corporate activity tax, proceeds from which go into an earmarked fund for school improvement programs.

Like the other candidates, Hass supports Oregon’s first-in-the-nation system of all-mail elections and increased cybersecurity, particularly for the statewide voter registration database created in the early 2000s. But he said it’s time for upgrades to the system, including new machines that counties use to verify voter signatures.

He also was a chief sponsor of a proposed constitutional amendment, subject to voter approval Nov. 3, to allow regulation of campaign contributions and spending as an exception to Oregon’s free-expression guarantee.

On audits, Hass said he would be active in selecting programs but let the professionals do their work without interference. He did say that state government’s response to the coronavirus pandemic should be the focus of a future performance audit.

“I do not want to point fingers here,” he said. “We are in uncharted waters, and I doubt there has been anything nefarious. But we need these answers to be better prepared for the next emergency.”

He has been endorsed by two former



State Sen. Mark Hass

secretaries of state, Phil Keisling and Bill Bradbury.

Hass has raised less this year than Shemia Fagan, but his campaign cash on hand on April 27 topped \$200,000 because of fundraising in 2019. Among top contributors: Richard Roy, Center for Earth Leadership, \$25,000; and The Papé Group, \$15,000.

He lives in Raleigh Hills with his wife, Tamra, a speech pathologist. They have a daughter and son.

Jamie McLeod-Skinner

McLeod-Skinner, 52, is a lawyer who specializes in natural resources and has had a variety of jobs. She is campaigning as someone from outside state government, and outside the Portland-Salem corridor who can bridge the urban-rural political gap. Of the 12 secretaries starting with Mark Hatfield, only one had no connection with state government before taking office — although three others had not held elected office — and only three came from outside the Willamette Valley.

“The times we are living in require a different kind of leadership,” she said. “You have seen the divisiveness and fighting in the Legislature. Rural Democrats do things a little differently. We are used to working together with our neighbors, even people who have different philosophies. Bridging the divide is really important. Having relationships statewide is important.”

McLeod-Skinner won 39% in her losing bid in 2018 against U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, although his 56% was his lowest share of the vote in 11 elections in the vast 2nd District, which covers 70% of Oregon. Walden is retiring from Congress this year.

She is on the Jefferson County Education Service District board, and from 2004 through 2012, she was on the city council in Santa Clara, California. She sits on the Ore-



Jamie McLeod-Skinner

gon Watershed Enhancement Board.

Unlike the others, she said, she has been an implementer. She was an environmental planner for the Santa Clara Valley Water District for six years, and city manager of Phoenix, Oregon, for five months.

“I’m the only one with actual government experience other than policymaking,” she said.

She views the office as an executive agency.

While she praised the pending statewide ballot measure to allow regulation of campaign finances, McLeod-Skinner said the Legislature should have referred to voters a companion law to take effect upon approval. She also said the Legislature should propose lowering the voting age and allowing Election-Day voter registration — both would require voter approval — and should allow counting of ballots postmarked on Election Day, as is the case in Washington state.

Like other candidates, she said sustainability should be a component of future audits of state agencies and other programs.

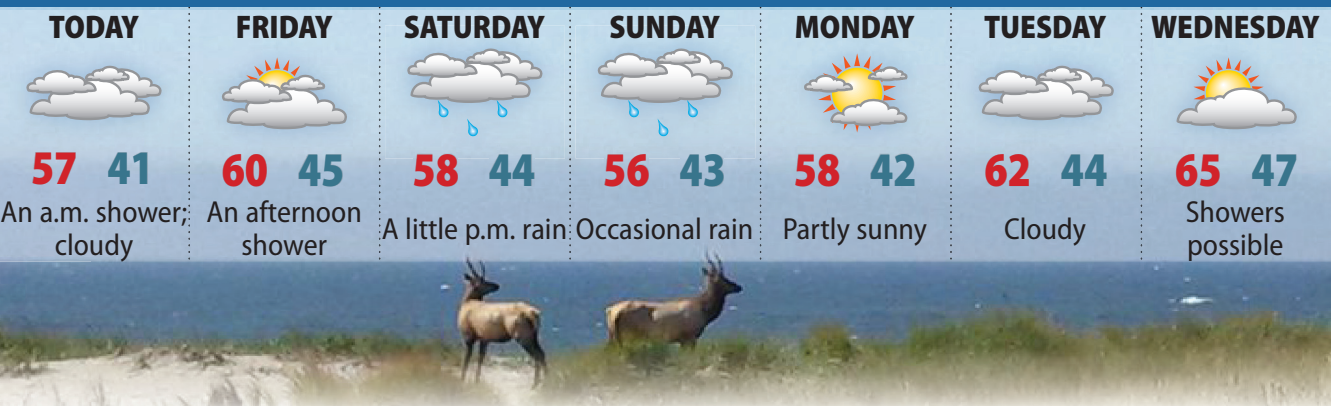
McLeod-Skinner trails the others in fundraising, although the amount she has amassed so far this year is close to the total for Hass. Her largest contribution was a transfer from her 2018 congressional campaign committee.

She has been endorsed by Jeanne Atkins, a former top legislative staffer who was secretary of state by appointment in 2015 and 2016, and chairwoman of the Democratic Party of Oregon in 2017 and 2018. She has a list of endorsers, although not quite as long as those for Hass and Fagan.

McLeod-Skinner and her wife, Cassandra, live in Terrebonne outside Redmond. They have four children.

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

SEVEN-DAY FORECAST FOR ASTORIA



ALMANAC

Astoria through Tuesday

Temperatures

High/low	59/42
Normal high/low	58/42
Record high	81 in 1925
Record low	32 in 1985

Precipitation

Tuesday	0.00"
Month to date	1.92"
Normal month to date	4.93"
Year to date	32.01"
Normal year to date	30.02"

Forecasts and graphics provided by
AccuWeather, Inc. ©2020

UNDER THE SKY

Tonight's Sky: Sunrise now before 6:00 a.m. through Aug. 5.

Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	6:03 a.m.
Sunset tonight	8:23 p.m.
Moonrise today	12:00 p.m.
Moonset today	2:50 a.m.

First	Full	Last	New
Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 22

TODAY'S TIDES

Astoria / Port Docks	Time	High (ft.)	Time	Low (ft.)
6:19 a.m.	7.4	12:46 a.m.	3.7	
8:45 p.m.	6.2	1:53 p.m.	0.4	
Cape Disappointment	6:05 a.m.	7.1	1:08 p.m.	0.4
8:29 p.m.	6.2	none		
Hammond	6:14 a.m.	7.3	12:23 a.m.	4.0
8:38 p.m.	6.3	1:28 p.m.	0.2	
Warrenton	6:14 a.m.	7.8	12:30 a.m.	3.8
8:40 p.m.	6.6	1:37 p.m.	0.5	
Knappa	6:56 a.m.	7.7	1:47 a.m.	3.2
9:22 p.m.	6.5	2:54 p.m.	0.4	
Depoe Bay	5:14 a.m.	7.0	12:38 p.m.	0.0
7:44 p.m.	6.1	none		

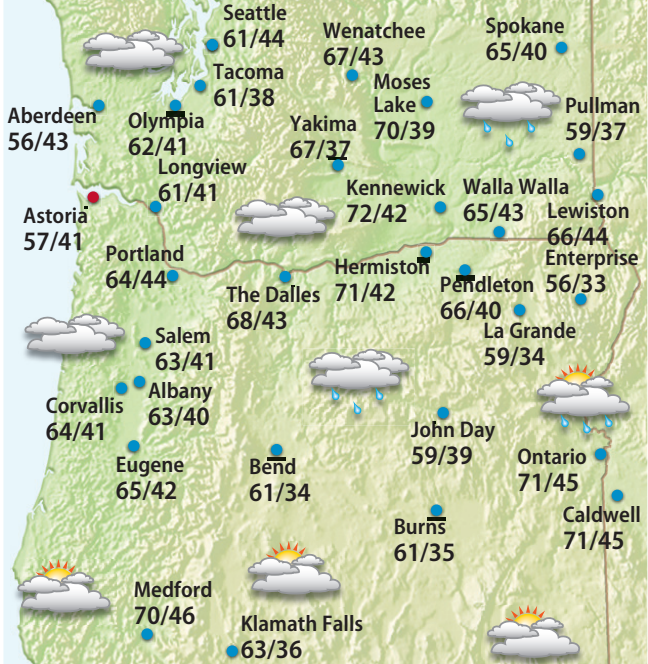
NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today Hi/Low	Fri. Hi/Low
Atlanta	66/49/pc	73/53/s
Boston	54/46/sh	59/49/r
Chicago	52/43/r	63/48/pc
Dallas	84/62/s	90/63/pc
Denver	86/53/pc	83/49/pc
Honolulu	84/72/pc	84/72/s
Houston	82/57/s	86/66/s
Los Angeles	80/59/pc	81/59/pc
Miami	86/71/t	87/67/s
New York City	61/56/sh	65/52/sh
Phoenix	104/74/pc	102/72/s
San Francisco	67/51/pc	68/53/pc
Wash., DC	68/54/r	65/55/sh
Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, l-ice.		

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REGIONAL FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



City	Today Hi/Low	Fri. Hi/Low	City	Today Hi/Low	Fri. Hi/Low
Baker City	60/32/pc	68/35/c	North Bend	58/45/c	60/49/pc
Brookings	58/45/c	59/50/c	Roseburg	69/45/c	72/48/pc
Ilwaco	55/44/c	57/49/c	Seaside	56/42/c	59/46/sh
Newberg	62/41/c	65/45/c	Springfield	65/42/c	69/45/pc
Newport	55/43/c	57/49/c	Vancouver	63/43/c	67/47/c