

Union: Dems face a more challenging race for House District 32

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Members of the labor federation and Weber have characterized the rule as another example of urban elites dictating their will over local sentiment.

Democrats face a more challenging race for House District 32 since state Rep. Tiffany Mitchell announced she was moving to Washington state and would not run for reelection. Republicans, buoyed by a backlash to proposed climate legislation and the rural advocacy group #TimberUnity, have one of their best chances in years to flip the district.

Boothe-Schmidt, a trial assistant with Clatsop County Circuit Court, has received most of the union support. Weber, the mayor of Tillamook and a former teacher, has been backed by #TimberUnity and most industry groups, including Koch Industries, the owner of the Wauna Mill.

Mike Smith, a worker at the Wauna Mill and president of the local federation, said members of the local federation invited both Weber and Boothe-Schmidt to interview for the endorsement at their general meeting last week, but that only Weber showed. Boothe-Schmidt denied ever being invited to speak with labor federation members and said the group hasn't previously done endorsements.

A representative of Boothe-Schmidt's campaign said she had approached Smith more than a month ago about an endorsement from the United Steelworkers, which represents workers at Wauna Mill.

Paul Putkey, a county surveyor and president of Boothe-Schmidt's union, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 2746 chapter, said none of his approximately 250 members in the local labor federation were told about an endorsement interview. His local union would not endorse candidates for state Legislature, he said. The statewide affiliate of his union has backed Boothe-Schmidt.

"Time and time again, when local members in this district were given the chance to participate in the process, they chose me," Boothe-Schmidt said in a statement. "I'm endorsed by unions for teachers, nurses, home care workers, mental health providers, public safety and other county workers."

Weber has taken a hard line against proposed cap-and-trade legislation that

would tax large industrial polluters like Wauna Mill and has become a flashpoint for the urban-rural divide in the Legislature. Boothe-Schmidt has been noncommittal on the legislation.

Smith claimed the local endorsement had nothing to do with cap and trade.

A representative of the Oregon AFL-CIO said both Weber and Boothe-Schmidt had been sent questionnaires representing the group's priorities as part of its endorsement process for state races. Weber never responded, while Boothe-Schmidt submitted the questionnaire and was voted for by at least two-thirds of an endorsement board, including around 40 members from different unions across the state, the representative said.

"I had no intention of seeking the endorsement of political insiders in Portland," Weber said in a statement. "The Oregon AFL-CIO is one of the most overtly hyperpartisan lobbyist groups in the state, and extreme partisanship is exactly what we do not need."

After news of the local federation's endorsement of Weber came out, Smith said, the head of the Oregon AFL-CIO reached out and gave them until Friday to remove the endorsement. They had never reached out to consult with the local federation about the endorsement of Boothe-Schmidt, he said.

Weber's campaign removed mention of the endorsement on her social media and later issued a response in which she decried Portland political elites.

"These are the people who want to defund our police departments, shut down our forests and do whatever extremist politicians tell them," Weber said in a statement. "The supposed 'leaders' in Portland might choose to ignore the will of union members in rural Northwest Oregon, but I never will. We need a state representative chosen by the people who live and work here, not someone like Debbie Boothe-Schmidt who will only rubber-stamp anything and everything the Portland political elites tell her to."

Boothe-Schmidt responded that Weber "doesn't have support from working people and doesn't support important policies that impact working families like expanding paid sick leave or raising wages. She is misleading you by pointing to this one group that doesn't have dues-paying members to make it look like she's a champion for working families."



Suzanne Weber



Debbie Boothe-Schmidt



Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

From left, Nathalie Kellow, Diana Gulley and Rainier Reyes stand outside Gulley's Butcher Shop.

Ghost tour: Gulley's underground was featured on 'Ghost Adventures'

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the tour, such as their spirit box, high-depth thermometer and K2 meter, which picks up electromagnetic fields.

Gulley, Reyes and Kellow are most intrigued by what the space was in its early existence, before the 1922 fire. The original walls that hold up the floor of the butcher shop show where the fire stopped — halfway down the wall.

They wonder if when the space was originally built, it was used as a boarding house. The furniture, rooms and bathrooms with wooden toilets indicate they could be right.

Another clue was an old trap door on the ceiling, where it would have connected to the back room in the underground.

"I just know something bad happened down there," said Gulley, whose parents own the building.

Kellow recalls being told by Gulley not to move or touch anything, and thinks "maybe there's a reason why nothing has left that place."

The Gulley's underground was featured on the Travel Channel's "Ghost Adventures." In the episode, Zak Bagans, Nick Groff and Aaron Goodwin were drawn to the space when they investigated the alleged haunting of the Liberty Theatre.

"Ghost Adventures is what really put Gulley's on the map," Reyes said.

The episode sparked Reyes and Kellow's interest in the history of the underground on that particular block, and raised some questions they are determined to answer.

In a town like Astoria, Reyes said, the best stories are passed along through generations of locals, which is where they hope to find more information.



According to Diana Gulley, a vase mysteriously moves around the underground.



From left, Rainier Reyes, Nathalie Kellow and Diana Gulley inspect a trap door leading from the building above to the basement.



Paranormal investigator Nathalie Kellow's K2 meter lights up while exploring the underground beneath Gulley's Butcher Shop.

The online group has gained a following of paranormal enthusiasts. Reyes and Kellow update the page with sneak peeks and information about the upcoming tour.

Reyes and Kellow plan to do an investigation of the underground using their equipment. They're looking for clues that indicate the history of the space as they prepare for the tours to begin in August.

Potential tourgoers can get their name on a waiting list by emailing Gulley's Butcher Shop or visiting the shop.

"I'm so excited to go back," Reyes said. "There's a really in-depth conversation we have to have about everything down there."

GhostOria is the name of a Facebook group Reyes and Kellow made in late June, where they share their

investigation experiences in the Pacific Northwest. Their motto: "We will find the truth."

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