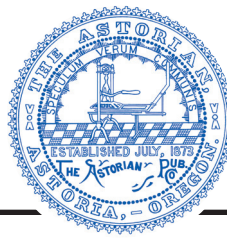


# OPINION



# the Astorian

editor@dailyastorian.com

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## GUEST COLUMN

# Where Kristof voted shouldn't matter

I am surprised that state election officials rejected former New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof's candidacy for Oregon governor largely because he registered to vote in the state where that newspaper is published.

I personally know that an Oregon court already has ruled that where a candidate votes does not determine what

they consider home. I don't know that because I covered some trial as a reporter. I know it because I testified as a witness in support of the winning candidate, my friend and University of Oregon classmate Bill Wyatt, 47 years ago.



**JIM REDDEN**

Kristof was raised in Yamhill and owns his family's farm there. He filed for the 2022 governor's race as a Democrat in December. The Oregon Constitution requires that candidates for governor be a resident of the state for three years before the election. Kristof maintains that he has always considered Oregon his home, even though he moved out of the state for college and employment, and registered to vote in New York while working there. Kristof said that he has repeatedly returned to the farm over the years and invested in it.

Kristof voted in New York during the 2020 election.

The Oregon Elections Division and Secretary of State Shemia Fagan ruled against Kristof's candidacy on Thursday.

"The rules are the rules and they apply equally to all candidates for office in Oregon. I stand by the determination of the experts in the Oregon Elections Division that Mr. Kristof does not currently meet the constitutional requirements to run or serve as Oregon governor," Fagan said in a news release. "As Oregon's chief elections official, it is my responsibility to make sure all candidates on the statewide ballot are qualified to serve if elected."

During the follow-up press conference, Fagan repeatedly stressed the importance of Kristof registering and voting in New York. Kristof intends to appeal.

But the question about voting and residency was resolved a different way in 1974 during a trial in the Marion County Circuit Court.

Wyatt is best known as the former director of the Port of Portland. But at that time, he was an Oregon state repre-



State elections officials have ruled that Nicholas Kristof is ineligible to run in the Democratic primary for governor.

sentative from House District 2 on the North Coast. He had won the Democrat primary nomination in the May primary election and had been appointed to fill the vacancy created when the incumbent retired before the general election.

I have not yet tracked down the court records and they may no longer exist. But the case was documented at the time in a series of articles in The Oregonian that I have obtained. They started on Oct. 2 of that year with a report that then-Attorney General Lee Johnson had asked Wyatt to verify his residency in the district. The request was made after a resident filed a complaint that said Wyatt had not lived in the district for the year required of legislative candidates because he has moved to Eugene

and I had been at the U of O at the same time, someone asked me whether I'd voted in Lane County and if I considered Eugene my home then. I said that, although I voted in Eugene, I considered Medford my home, because that's where I was raised, where my family lived and where I returned during school breaks. So since Wyatt and I agreed, I volunteered to testify in his support during his trial.

I had no problem testifying that I considered Medford my home, even though I voted in Eugene. The deputy Oregon attorney general representing the state asked if I didn't understand that, by signing the voter registration card, I had sworn an oath that I lived in Eugene. I think I replied that I hadn't read it, which prompted laughter in the courtroom, much to my chagrin.

Despite my ignorance of the alleged seriousness of voter registration cards, Marion County Circuit Judge Jena Schlegel ruled in Wyatt's favor and ordered his name restored to the ballot. She determined the question of domicile is largely one of intent, according to an Oct. 26, 1974, Oregonian story on the ruling.

"Continuous physical presence (within the district) is not required, she said. If it were, no one elected to Congress could meet residency requirements for the office," the article reads.

Wyatt won the general election on Nov. 5, 1974, and Johnson advised Myers not to appeal the court ruling. According to a Nov. 14 Oregonian article, Johnson said the case was moot because Wyatt had won the election. But the bottom line is: The state chose not to appeal the decision.

Wyatt went on to become Gov. John Kitzhaber's chief of staff, the director of the Port of Portland, and, now, the director of the Salt Lake City International Airport, overseeing its multibillion-dollar renovation.

There are undoubtedly differences between legal requirements for the two offices — governor vs. state representative — and lawyers can be paid good money to quibble over them. History likely will repeat itself and the question of Kristof's eligibility will be decided in court. But everyone should know that a similar case already was decided in the candidate's favor.

Jim Redden covers Portland for the Portland Tribune. This guest column is part of a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

At the time, I was working for the state Senate Democrat Majority Office at the Oregon Legislature. Because Wyatt

restored his name to the ballot.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Big believer

I'm a new subscriber, and I just love your paper. I'm a big believer in the idea that our decline in civility is directly connected to our decline in newspapers.

I'm glad to see someone swimming against the current. I think your journalism is first-rate.

**JAMES HEFFERNAN**  
Tillamook

## Commentary

Andrea McDermid, the owner of Gizmo's Arcade & Eatery on Commercial Street, submitted a cartoon as commentary about how she feels about the downtown area near her business.



## Missing

Having conversations with friends, many who work in the K-12 school system, has given me clarity as to why our country is going to hell in a handbasket: Parenting, or should I say, the lack of it.

Being a parent is the most rewarding endeavor humans can achieve. It's also the most difficult. All of our own character traits, good and bad, are put on public display. Our schools have become more like a child watching and parenting service than a place for education of the three R's. It's almost a 180-degree reversal of how the school system was just 30 years ago, according to a few of my friends.

The charade of entitlement is now being thrown in the faces of teachers and administrators alike by 7-year-old children. With no way of implementing any form of discipline without fear of retribution, it's no wonder why most of these educators are thinking of a career change.

Not too many years ago, I received death threats against my family, not me, after a few different local football games as a referee. I thought sports were for fun? So imagine how difficult it is to deal with that mentality coming from parents to your eighth grade English teacher, who gave out extra homework on a holiday weekend. Not to be mean, but to give the child an opportunity to catch up on assignments missed. That action is now taken as a personal insult by that child's parent.

Is respect of any kind to be found?

**TROY HASKELL**  
Astoria

## 'The SYRINGE in the STONE.'

