

# EAST OREGONIAN

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## OUR VIEW

# Cracks showing in one-party rule

Republicans dominated Oregon politics for much of our state's history. That one-party rule was not good for Oregon, and neither is the Democrats' one-party rule that persists today.

On Friday, that domination will be broken ... a bit. Dennis Richardson of Central Point in Southern Oregon will be sworn in as secretary of state, the first Republican elected to statewide office since Sen. Gordon Smith was elected in 1996 and 2002.

A healthy two-party system helps ensure that a broad range of interests are represented in the Oregon Capitol. Discussion is deeper. Issues and candidates are vetted more closely, instead of being approved or denied simply because of one party's dominance.

After all, most Oregonians occupy the broad center of the political spectrum and care little about party labels. That is why Richardson won at the November election, although Republican voters were outnumbered by Democrats and non-affiliated voters.

Richardson vowed to run the Secretary of State's Office in a nonpartisan manner, and he appears to be heeding that pledge. He plans to keep most of the agency department heads. For the vacant position of state elections director, he is hiring Steve Trout, who held that position for a while under Democratic Secretary of State Kate Brown.

Former Secretary of State Phil Keisling, who was the least-partisan Democrat elected to the office in recent decades, will open Richardson's swearing-in on Friday. (Fellow Democrats scorned Keisling for being even-handed in drawing the boundaries for legislative districts in 1991.)

Even as Dennis Richardson manages his office with a nonpartisan hand, his conservative views and rural perspective will influence decision-making in the Oregon

Capitol.

He will be the first Republican to serve on the State Land Board since Secretary of State Norma Paulus left office in 1985. The Land Board — comprising the governor, state treasurer and secretary of state — oversees nearly 1.6 million acres of land and related resources.

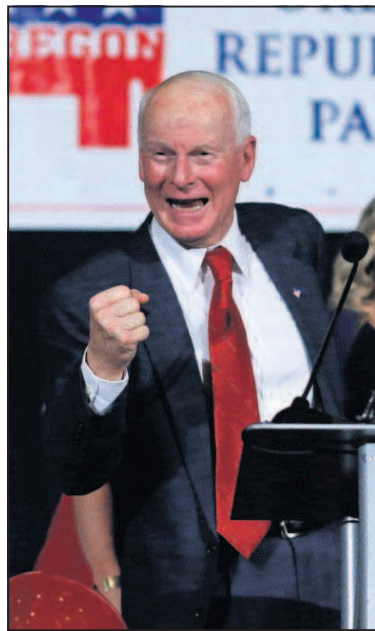
They include farm and range lands in Eastern Oregon, forests in Western Oregon, mineral rights and state-managed waterways. Among other things, the Land Board in 2017 will decide whether to proceed with the controversial sale of the Elliott State Forest.

Richardson also will be good for the Oregon Republican Party. He demonstrated that voters will support mainstream Republicans who are experienced and well-qualified, and Oregonians will reject Democrats who are far left of the mainstream — Richardson's opponent in this case, state Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian. It is worth remembering that Richardson won election with the support of at least two Democratic leaders — state

Sen. Betsy Johnson of Scappoose and state Rep. Brad Witt of Clatskanie — and he received every newspaper endorsement.

Oregon's Republican election machinery deteriorated over the years, because there were too few viable statewide Republican candidates to keep the campaign consultants in business. In contrast, Oregon is awash with Democratic campaign consultants. Those trends contributed to Oregon's leftward swing in state politics.

Richardson's victory gives hope for a resurgence among Republicans. But the party must field experienced, well-qualified candidates who represent mainstream Oregon



AP file photo

**Dennis Richardson pumps his fist at an election night event at the Salem Convention Cen-**

## Swearing in

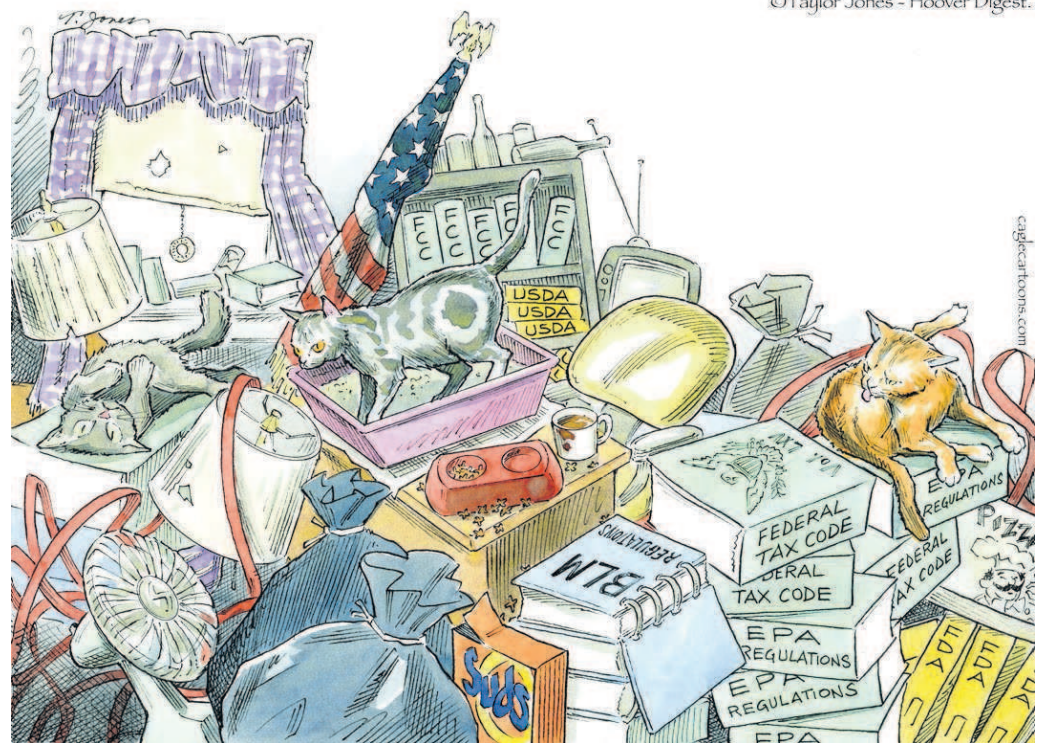
**Dennis Richardson will be sworn in as secretary of state.**

**When: 11 a.m. Friday.**

**Where: State Senate Chambers, Oregon Capitol, Salem.**

**Who: Former Secretary of State Phil Keisling will open the ceremony. Oregon Rep. Greg Walden will speak. Oregon Supreme Court Justice David Brewer will administer the oath of office.**

**Attendance: The ceremony is open to the public and will be streamed online. The Richardson campaign expects at least 600 people to attend.**



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## OTHER VIEWS

# The Trump matrix

Anyone who tells you, with perfect confidence, what a Trump administration will do is either bluffing or a fool. We have a prospective Cabinet and a White House staff, but we haven't got the first idea how the two will fit together or how the man at the top will preside over it all.

What we can do is set up a matrix to help assess the Trump era as it proceeds, in which each appointment and development gets plotted along two axes. The first axis, the X-axis, represents possibilities for Trumpist policy, the second, the Y-axis, scenarios for Donald Trump's approach to governance.

The policy axis runs from full populism at one end to predictable conservative orthodoxy on the other. A full populist presidency would

give us tariffs and trade wars, an infrastructure bill that would have Robert Moses doing back flips, a huge wall and E-Verify and untouched entitlements and big tax cuts for the middle class. On foreign policy it would be Henry Kissinger meets Andrew Jackson: détente with Russia, no nation-building anywhere, and a counterterrorism strategy that shoots, bombs and drones first and asks questions later.

In an orthodox-conservative Trump presidency, on the other hand, congressional Republicans would run domestic policy and Trump would simply sign their legislation: A repeal of Obamacare without an obvious replacement, big tax cuts for the rich, and the Medicare reform of Paul Ryan's fondest dreams. On foreign policy, it would offer hawkishness with a dose of idealistic rhetoric — meaning brinkmanship with Vladimir Putin plus military escalation everywhere.

The second axis, the possibilities for how Trump governs, runs from ruthless authoritarianism at one end to utter chaos at the other. Under the authoritarian scenario, Trump would act on all his worst impulses with malign efficiency. The media would be intimidated, Congress would be gelded, the Trump family would enrich itself fantastically — and then, come a major terrorist attack, Trump would jail or intern anyone he deemed a domestic enemy.

At the other end of this axis, Trump and his team would be too stumbling and hapless to effectively oppress anyone, and the Trump era would just be a rolling disaster — with the deep state in revolt, the media circling greedily and any serious damage done by accident rather than design.

Trump's transition can be charted along both axes. On policy, much of his Cabinet falls closer to the conventional conservative end, with appointees like Tom Price and Betsy DeVos, who would be at home in a Ted Cruz or Marco Rubio or even Jeb! administration.

On the other hand, his inner circle will have



**ROSS DOUTHAT**  
Comment

its share of truer Trumpists. Stephen Bannon is intent on remaking the GOP along nationalist lines, Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump seem eager for their paterfamilias to negotiate with Democrats, Peter Navarro is girding for a trade war with China. And Trump's foreign policy choices — especially Rex Tillerson at State — seem closer to full-Trumpist realpolitik than to Reaganism-as-usual.

On the governance axis, the president-elect's strong-arming of the private sector, his media-bashing tweets and his feud with the intelligence community all suggest an authoritarian timeline ahead.

But anyone who fears incompetence more than tyranny has plenty of evidence as well. Trump's tweets might be a sign not of an

incipient autocrat but of an unstable president who will undermine himself at every step. He has no cushion in popular opinion: If things go even somewhat badly, his political capital will go very fast indeed. He has plenty of hacks, wild cards and misfit toys occupying positions of real responsibility — and his White House has already had its first sex scandal!

Then, finally, there is the question of how

the axes interact. A populist-authoritarian combination might seem natural, with Trump using high-profile deviations from conservative orthodoxy to boost his popularity even as he runs roughshod over republican norms.

But you could also imagine an authoritarian-orthodox conservative combination, in which congressional Republicans accept the most imperial of presidencies because it's granting them tax rates and entitlement reforms they have long desired.

Or you could imagine a totally incompetent populism, in which Trump flies around the country holding rallies while absolutely nothing in Washington gets done ... or a totally incompetent populism that ultimately empowers conventional conservatism, because Trump decides that governing isn't worth it and just lets Paul Ryan run the country.

As for what we should actually hope for — well, the center of the matrix seems like the sweet spot for the country: A Trump presidency that is competent-enough without being dictatorial and that provides a populist corrective to conservatism without taking us all the way to mercantilism or a debt crisis.

But this is Donald Trump we're talking about, so a happy medium seems unlikely. Along one axis or the other, bet on the extremes.

Ross Douthat, the previous senior editor at *The Atlantic*, joined *The New York Times* as an *Op-Ed* columnist in 2009.

## YOUR VIEWS

### Work isn't over after votes are counted

Since the presidential campaign and election, things are different across the country and here in Umatilla County. There is a silence between neighbors, a quiet uncertainty and anxiety within our communities — and a reluctance to interact on expectations, desires, and fears for the next four years.

The election was unlike anything we have ever experienced in recent history. It was so divisive. Dialogue enabled intolerance of differences to openly threaten people who "are not like us." It was different here as well. I have never seen such a lack of bumper stickers and yard signs on either side. Unfortunately, some of those that did appear were very disrespectful, reflecting the nature of the campaign.

We vote our values. While I deeply believe we all share many more values than those that separate us, the choices we make also divide us. Words matter, and actions matter more. The fears that we see are more than normal post-election fears. They are guttural fears for what might happen to our country and citizens over the next several years. The choices now being made for top Administrative positions are symbolic and telling.

Whoever we voted for, it is our responsibility as citizens to keep the integrity and respect of our great nation. We must pay attention. We must stay involved. We need to hold all our elected officials to this degree of integrity, and not just lay back and watch what happens. There is too much at stake for our communities, our children, and our nation.

Jeff Blackwood  
Pendleton

### Perfect time to invest in culture

As a very eventful 2016 draws to a close, I encourage members of our community to consider culture — and the Oregon Cultural Trust — for their end-of-year giving.

During times of great change, culture helps keep us centered. Regardless of what is happening in the world, we have our culture — our music, our books and our heritage — to bring us together.

Here in Oregon, we also have the unique opportunity to receive a tax credit when we support culture. Just make a donation to one of 1,400+ qualified cultural groups across the state, like our very own Happy Canyon, then match it with a gift to the Cultural Trust. Come tax time, you will receive a tax credit for your

donation to the Cultural Trust.

You double the impact of your donation for free. This is uniquely Oregon, no other state in the union rewards its citizens for investing in culture!

This year, donations to the Cultural Trust had a direct impact on our community's livability and economy. A total of 149 grants totaling \$2.9 million were awarded to Oregon's cultural nonprofits, including \$8,584 to the Eastern Oregon Regional Arts Council; \$12,143 to the Grande Ronde Symphony Association; \$9,067 to the Union County Cultural Coalition; \$7,035 to the Wallowa County Cultural Coalition; \$14,562 to the Umatilla County Cultural Coalition; and \$6,623 to the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla.

The Cultural Trust envisions an Oregon that champions and invests in creative expression and cultural exchange, driving innovation and opportunity for all. Our mission is to lead Oregon in cultivating, growing and valuing culture as an integral part of communities.

Please help us protect Oregon's famous quality of life by supporting local cultural groups and the Oregon Cultural Trust. Our cultures make Oregon strong.

Charles F. Sams III  
Oregon Cultural Trust board member  
Pendleton

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## LETTERS POLICY

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published. Send letters to managing editor Daniel Wattenburger, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.

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