

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

KATHRYN B. BROWN
PublisherDANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing EditorTIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

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OUR VIEW

Hoyle understands Oregon's complexities



Val Hoyle

When everything is working correctly, labor and industry go hand in hand — a trained workforce supports productive business, and vice versa.

In Oregon, it's the labor commissioner's job to keep that balance by overseeing apprenticeship programs, minimum wage standards, civil rights complaints and housing practices. It's a big job, and crucial in all corners of the state.

The Bureau of Labor and Industry in recent years has had a noticeably urban focus, and spent a lot of energy initiating complaints against businesses. Brad Avakian, who has held the top post since 2008, will be remembered as the commissioner who issued a \$135,000 judgment against a Gresham bakery for declining to bake a wedding cake for a same sex couple. That ruling is being challenged in the Oregon Court of Appeals.

It's time for a new approach, and we're pleased that the front runners for the nonpartisan seat are both on board with change.

Val Hoyle was the Democratic state representative of the diverse district that encompassed West Eugene out to rural Junction City. Lou Ogden, a Republican,

is an insurance broker and has been the mayor of Tualatin since 1995. A third candidate, Jack Howard, has not campaigned for the job.

Ogden is thoughtful and would no doubt take the job seriously, but relies on anecdotes and generalizations to explain how BOLI should operate. He says he would put the "I" back in BOLI, but

rather than swing the pendulum we'd prefer to bring back the balance.

Hoyle's vision is for a department that both businesses and workers see as allies, not enemies.

She said she would develop a more responsive investigatory arm, but one doesn't strong-arm small businesses who cannot afford an HR department and legal team, nor would it force those following the rules to compete against those who don't. And she has committed to being a presence in all parts of the state, not just the valley.

She also has a track record of bipartisan work in the legislature, and was instrumental in turning an aggressive \$15 statewide minimum wage standard into a tiered system that complements Oregon's complexities.

Hoyle understands Oregon and the needs of both its workforce and businesses. She's the right choice for the job.

Judge's race offers opposite candidates



Rob Collins

The race for Umatilla Circuit Court Judge has generated perhaps the most discussion this election season.

It features Pendleton attorneys Michael Breiling and Rob Collins, each of whom are running to fill the seat of retiring judge Lynn Hampton.

It's a complicated choice as both men are so different personally and have unique backgrounds in the law.

Thankfully, we think whichever one is elected will do a fine job in the position while bringing both assets and shortcomings.

Breiling has a been-there-done-that kind of quality. He's seen the inside of a courtroom many times, so he's got the street cred there. He knows what's expected of a judge, and he operates in a no-nonsense mode. That sounds great in a routine criminal trial, where a judge has to oversee proceedings, avoid pitfalls and operate the courtroom efficiently. That may not be the best attitude in a sensitive, high stakes civil case, for instance, where a child's future is a stake.

You can flip that script when you talk about Rob Collins. He has not been a full-time courtroom lawyer for awhile, so it's understandable that

he's out of practice with the rat-a-tat back and forth of courtroom wrangling. Yet he does have plenty of experience in sensitive and complicated legal maneuvering that has benefited his clients, and often in family law cases, the community at large. He has an excellent background in community leadership

and personal experience with the justice system that will benefit him on the bench.

We're not lawyers. We've never been to law school, and we're a few years behind on "Law and Order" episodes. We're not convinced that, despite recent head-scratching appointments, circuit court judges should be an elected position. It's hard to think that a majority of voters can be informed and unbiased about this race.

We think the court administrator will make it work no matter who wins. But from our perspective, Collins brings more skills to the position at this moment in time. The younger Breiling should take the opportunity to run for the next open seat on the circuit court. He fits there, too.

YOUR VIEWS

Editor's note: These letters have been heavily edited for space. Read them in their entirety at www.eastoregonian.com.

Support extension district

Umatilla and Morrow counties have a billion dollar ag industry. The local Extension offices serve the industry throughout the region. Thousands of residents and families throughout the Umatilla and Morrow counties regularly use Extension and research services to support and build the regional agricultural economy. Last year alone, the gross sales of agricultural products produced in the region had a value of over a billion dollars.

Agriculture production and food manufacturing represent 17,607 jobs, or about 37 percent of the regional workforce. The Extension services we use give us a competitive edge globally. Just imagine for a minute if Extension didn't exist and how far behind we would be in various categories like research and development. So please, support the new levy for Extension in both Umatilla and Morrow counties.

Justin Terry
Hermiston

Oppose extension district

I was not holding my breath about the *East Oregonian's* endorsements for city council seats in Pendleton. I think now is the time to say why I decided to run again for the city council. When our council approved the vote on the new taxing district (OSU Extension District) without knowing the complete story, I had to run.

You have heard our county commissioners say they just wanted to let us vote. They did not tell the cities the complete story. If our Pendleton City Council had said no to the vote, Pendleton would have not been included in this new taxing district.

One city, I think it was Umatilla, said no the first time. The people representing the new taxing district said if the city would allow the vote, the agency would collect from any city that does not allow the vote for any service the extension agency gave that city. So the city council voted to be included. I asked one of our county commissioners if the cities knew what they were really voting on, and he said no.

The committee for the new district has around \$30,000 to spend to pass this tax. The quality of life Pendleton does not have that kind of money to oppose this 33 cents tax. If you love Pendleton, vote no.

Rex J. Morehouse
Pendleton

Support Larry Givens

In this election for county commissioner, there is one candidate, our current commissioner Larry Givens, who has the experience and drive necessary to see the matter through. He has "walked the walk" instead of just "talking the talk."

Whether it is wind turbines or land use, economic development or transportation, he is always trying to find ways to get the best result for the most people. He is a problem solver, in the best sense of the word.

Dylan Warsech
Milton-Freewater

Support George Murdock

Jill and I ask that you join us in supporting George Murdock for Umatilla County commissioner. We have been impressed with George's leadership ability in guiding the county to a higher level of oversight, general management and fiscal prudence.

We all want leadership in government that embraces the skill George has demonstrated in providing management and oversight that has led to good fiscal outcomes for Umatilla County.

Mike and Jill Thorne
Pendleton

I find it extremely troubling that Mr. Pullen seems to be using his voice to negatively impact Mr. Murdock in order to win votes rather than making his campaign about his ability and qualifications to help run our county.

Mr. Murdock has served our county with honesty and integrity and will continue to provide valuable expertise in the next four years regardless of information misconstrued or misunderstood from a single conversation. If he says he is running for a four-year term, he intends to complete a four-year term. He has been, and will continue to be, the best candidate for this position.

Arta Jones
Hermiston

Support Givens, Murdock

I urge the people in Umatilla County to vote for Larry Givens and George Murdock because they have the experience, and contacts that mean so much in helping Umatilla County.

What I mean as contacts is that I traveled across this country and it took years to know the people I needed to help me in my jobs. Both Larry Givens and George Murdock have developed the contacts in federal, state, city and county departments. That's how they get things done for the citizens of

Umatilla. To lose that experience would only hurt our communities.

Jack McWhinnie
Umatilla

Morehouse for council

We need Rex Morehouse on city council because he is more up-to-speed with the goings-ons at city council than any other candidate. He goes to all of the meetings. He does his own research and enlists friends and foes to help get to the truth. He always prefers making friends to making enemies. He is a retiree on a budget who identifies with young families just starting out and never forgot what it was like for his family starting out.

He will be taxpayers' representative on city council and is well suited with his inquiring mind.

Let's elect Rex Morehouse.

Mike Montchalin
Pendleton

Innes for council

Carole Innes is the perfect person for this position. She will be prepared and work diligently in representing the people in Ward 1. Carole has given many hours to our community through involvement in Altrusa, the Blue Mountain Community College Foundation, the Alcohol Foundation and many others.

I have known Carole for many years and know that when she is involved in or leads a project she gives it 100 percent.

Terri Taber
Pendleton

Collins for judge

Our family has known Rob Collins for well over 30 years. Although we consider him a dear friend, we have also hired him as our attorney many times. He is patient and has an understanding of what is right and fair. In addition to knowing the law, he is extremely professional and trustworthy.

Rob and Trina Merriman
Pendleton

Moderate Democrats are not the best choice in 2018

I'm writing as a congressional candidate to challenge the premise of your April 23 opinion piece, "Our view: Moderate candidates offer the best challenge to incumbents."

Moderates don't offer the best challenge to incumbents — progressives do. Here's why: Rural America already has a Republican Party. The last 25 years have

proven that Democrats don't win by being Republicans Lite. We win by offering something different, something better, and by sticking with it.

2018 is not 2016. A lot has changed. Now, the majority of Americans favor some kind of universal single-payer healthcare. Unions are a healthy, resurgent force in our economy. We are finally moving toward common sense, practical gun reform to keep our nation and our kids safer in urban and rural communities alike. These are new and powerful trends. Together they frame a progressive, positive vision to move towards, not simply a kinder, gentler version of the status quo.

The seven candidates in this primary field have run a respectful, intelligent, and civil campaign. My strong hope is that all of us will be in elected office somewhere in the district by 2020. And while there are real policy differences between us, we have not resorted to attack politics. Moreover, we have all committed to support the eventual winner of the primary. Greg Walden won't be facing one opponent on May 16. He'll be facing seven. Are you paying attention, Mr. Walden? You should be.

That being said, the impact of decades of failed status quo politics on Oregon's 2nd congressional district are crystal clear: job loss. The opioid crisis. Inadequate affordable housing. Deepening rural poverty. Failed healthcare systems. The list is long. Doing more of the same thing won't make it work any better. A progressive candidate backed by a strong, unified field of primary challengers is most likely to win.

Here's the point: I can beat Greg Walden precisely because I'm a practical and progressive candidate.

Eric Burnette
Hood River

McLeod-Skinner for U.S. Rep

Unfortunately, across our nation and here at home, many decisions to help people with disabilities are made in a political venue. Funds are made available by decisions made by Congress. As we approach the primary vote for Oregon's Second Congressional District, please keep in mind that we need to help our local homeless folks with disabilities.

I have chosen to support Jamie McLeod-Skinner to represent us in the U.S. Congress. People with severe disabilities need assistance with skills that most of us take for granted. Jamie McLeod-Skinner has a belief that the public safety and welfare of all necessitates more social infrastructure for people with mental disabilities. She is right; more social infrastructure for homeless people and people with mental illness will help us all.

Chris Schuenig
Pendleton