

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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PublisherKATHRYN B. BROWN
OwnerDANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing Editor

Founded October 16, 1875

OTHER VIEWS

Buehler's real task is his party's rebirth

Candidate can become the voice of a new Oregon Republican Party

We may not like them, but political parties are central to our national dynamic. At their best, the parties evolve to something that more clearly represents our aspirations. At their worst, they ossify and become irrelevant to our real needs.

Ever since Oregon's last Republican governor, Victor Atiyeh — one of the state's best postwar chief executives — the Oregon GOP has languished in a religion-based miasma, in which stances on abortion and homosexuality have been litmus tests.

Now state Republicans have nominated a credible candidate for governor, Knute Buehler. So this is a moment of promise, for the GOP and for our state's political well-being. That is because the state's Democratic party has become a Portland-centric value system that often is blind to the rest of the state. Because statewide Democratic candidates can roll up big majorities in Multnomah County, the party easily becomes smug and predictable, while being the captive and servant of the public employee unions.

It could be said that President Donald Trump complicates any attempt by the Oregon GOP to redefine itself. But Oregon history

STEVE FORRESTER
Comment

contains at least two scenarios that are relevant to the task in front of Buehler.

It is hard to imagine today, but prior to the mid-1950s, Oregon Democrats were the minority party — without a U.S. senator since 1921 or a state legislative majority since 1878. That changed because of a liberal braintrust whose marquee name was Richard L. Neuberger — a state legislator and also one of America's most prolific magazine

writers and liberal voices.

When Neuberger won an Oregon House seat in Multnomah County in 1941, he became one of 24 Democratic representatives, outnumbered by 39 Republicans. Elected to the state Senate in 1949, Neuberger was one of 10 Democrats, outnumbered by 20 Republicans.

In 1952, Neuberger wrote: "No aisle divides the two parties, for the nine Democrats are heavily outnumbered by the 21 Republicans."

One of Neuberger's contemporaries whom I interviewed for biographical research said the Oregon Democratic party of the 1940s was "inarticulate." And it was Neuberger who gave the party a voice. By 1959, Democrats



Randy L. Rasmussen/The Oregonian

Republican gubernatorial candidate Knute Buehler gathered with supporters in Wilsonville during the May primary. Buehler, a doctor and state representative from Bend, will face Gov. Kate Brown in November.

had majorities in both the state House and Senate.

The second useful truth for Buehler is that for much of the 20th century, Republicans were Oregon's progressive party. Mark Hatfield, while a state representative, authored a Civil Rights Act in 1953. Statewide land use planning was authored by two Republican farmers — Stafford Hansell of Eastern Oregon and Hector MacPherson of the Willamette Valley. They were aided and abetted by a Republican governor, Tom McCall.

Political parties change their faces over the

years. While today's Oregon Republican Party has been stymied by religion-based barriers for more than a decade, it's essential for today's Republicans to realize that their party was once the engine of progress in this state.

So it's Buehler's moment. Like Neuberger some 60 years ago, Buehler can become the voice of a new Oregon Republican Party — laying out values that appeal to a broad swath of Oregonians, beyond the ideologically pure.

Steve Forrester is the president and CEO of EO Media Group.

YOUR VIEWS

PERS a lifeline for correctional officers

A dark money group has been running ads against the retirement benefits of working people like me in Oregon, and gubernatorial candidate Knute Buehler has said he wants to "end PERS." In response, I would like to share my story.

I have worked at Two Rivers Correctional Institution for 19 years. As a correctional corporal, I've done direct supervision of inmates in every part of the institution. Our staffing ratio on our units is two officers for every 112 inmates.

Corrections officers must be on high alert, almost like soldiers on a battlefield. There are inmates here who want to serve their time and get their lives back on track. There are, unfortunately, others who take a different approach. COs are under constant risk of attack. Over time, you become a different person. Your life changes. You begin seeing danger everywhere and can't be comfortable sitting with your back to the door in a restaurant. You are on permanent red alert with an unrelenting stream of adrenaline. This situation is exacerbated by the regularly required mandatory overtime.

The conditions are so extreme that corrections officers have the highest PTSD, divorce and death rates of any profession. Our average life span is 56 years.

So why risk our families, our health and our lives? Because traditionally this has been a secure job with consistent pay and secure benefits. We knew that if we came to work and did our part that we could support our families and have a secure retirement. Today's pension is much lower than those in the past, but it's better than no pension at all.

Now, Mr. Buehler is proposing a raid on my retirement. He wants to seize the 6 percent of my salary that I am required to pay towards my retirement and use it to pay the state's obligation to those who retired before me. If he does this, I will have to push my body to work long past retirement age. That's if I can make it. In what world is this fair?

If PERS is ended, Two Rivers will lose any advantage it had over Amazon or the other local employers. It's already difficult to hire qualified people who can pass the background check.

I am disappointed that a candidate for governor in Oregon would propose such

a cruel and harmful attack on working people like me.

Greg Clouser
Hermiston

Looking for doctors is like hunting unicorns

This week has been nothing short of exhausting! On Wednesday morning I woke up with sharp pains in my ankle. No injury, no reason. I opened my fridge and my ankle buckled completely. I clung desperately to the handle of the swinging door for dear life. When my grip gave out I fell backward on my tailbone and my head, hard! I laid there screaming for help and Jay came running. I could not move. He told me to just lay there for a minute or two.

The pain in my ankle, rear and head was skyrocketing. When Jay got me to an easy chair there were three big knots on my head. I called my PA at Pendleton Family Medicine. They could not see me until the 21st and told me to go to the emergency room.

Jay took me to ER, where I received excellent care from nurses and a doctor who never heard of me. By this time the three knots on my head had merged into one huge knot! They x-rayed my pelvis to see if anything was cracked, said they didn't think I had a concussion and released me a while later.

I went home to my chair and sat the rest of Wednesday and all day on Thursday. I did not move. By Friday I was going stir crazy. I thought, "I can't sit like this for days," but my ankle would not bear any weight. At 9 a.m. I began calling to see who could see me.

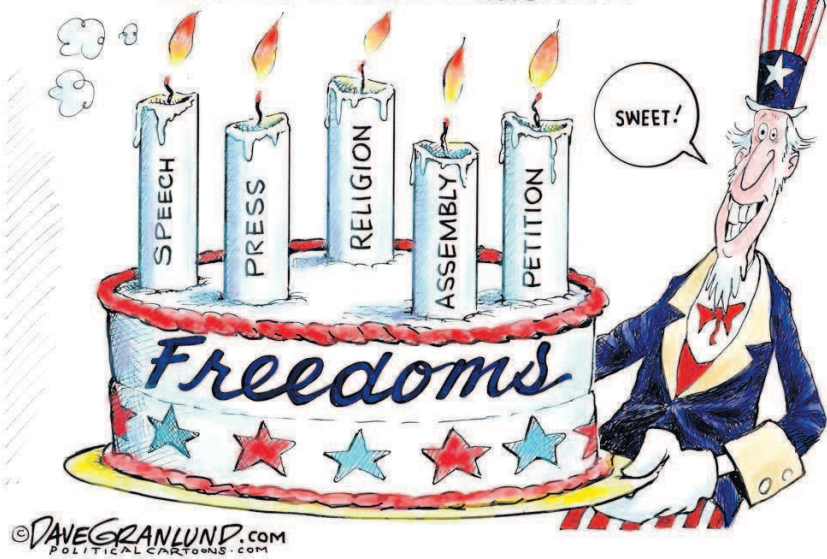
I even resorted to calling one new doctor. The receptionist said, "I will have her call you." Never called. I gave up went to the St. Anthony walk-in clinic. I was seen immediately — again by nice people who never heard of me.

So what is my point? Fifteen years ago in Pendleton, trying to find a doctor was not like hunting unicorns. I had a doctor. He was easy to find. He retired. He was a fully credentialed doctor, not a PA. That is not to say that PAs don't have to go to college too. But there are too many PAs and not enough doctors in Pendleton.

Am I going to be forced to go 35 miles to Walla Walla just to find one doctor who will see me when I need one? Pathetic!

Sharolyn Gemmell
Pendleton

The First Amendment...



OTHER VIEWS

The tariff toll on newsprint

By ANDREW JOHNSON

It isn't that easy to drop everything in the middle of the week and fly to Washington. If you're a community newspaper publisher, going anywhere in the middle of the week is a challenge. That is when the newspaper has to be edited, wrapped up in color, printed, labeled and distributed to readers.

People in Mayville, WI, where I publish the *Dodge County Pioneer*, count on my paper. It is how they find out what is happening in town. We don't have a local TV station. Facebook and Google are here, but the internet has no journalists in my town.

That is why I did drop everything one day in July and flew to the nation's capital to testify before the International Trade Commission. It probably surprised my readers that international trade is important to my little weekly newspaper. But it is. In fact, this commission holds in its hands the future of local journalism in Mayville. It holds the same reins for the future of news and information in thousands of small towns across the U.S. I went to ask the commissioners to stop taxing our paper. This tax is hurting the *Pioneer*, its readers and Mayville.

The paper we print on is newsprint, known in the industry as uncoated groundwood paper. Most of it comes from Canada. Although there are five paper mills in the U.S. that make this paper, American newspapers have also used Canadian paper for more than a century. It simply isn't possible in the continental U.S. to make enough newsprint to supply the needs of U.S. newspaper readers.

Last January, the Department of Commerce slapped a tax, better known as a tariff, on this Canadian paper, and then hit it again in March. The government was responding to a lawsuit by a single

paper mill, owned by a New York investment firm, alleging that the Canadian competition was affecting its profits. The ITC allowed the tax to stay in place while it investigates. For much of this year, American publishers have been receiving continual price increases from their printers, who have been trying all year to adjust to tariffs of more than 30 percent on the paper they use to print our editions. In early August, the federal government said the tariffs could be lowered somewhat in September, but they still would be about 20 percent. This newsprint price increase is very hard for small town newspapers to absorb.

It is the ITC that ultimately decides whether these tariffs will continue at all. Its job is to figure out whether tariffs would help U.S. producers. U.S. producers — the five U.S. mills — certainly face challenges. But those come from the fact that most large newspapers have dramatically cut back on paper usage. There is less demand for newsprint in the U.S., so lower prices have resulted. It is not unfair competition, but natural market forces, while digital editions take over the larger newspaper world that affect the papermakers. A tariff to punish Canada won't create more U.S. papermaking jobs. Larger publications will move faster to digital so they can buy less paper. Smaller ones like mine, will simply shrink and may go away entirely, leaving their towns with no local paper. This tariff just hurts the *Pioneer*, and newspapers like it.

The ITC will accept comments on this tax until Aug. 20. If you want to let the commissioners know what you think, you can find a contact form at www.usitc.gov.

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