

# Brown, Buehler spar in testier second debate

By DIRK VANDERHART  
Oregon Public Broadcasting



Rep. Knute Buehler (left) and Gov. Kate Brown squared off in the second of three debates on Thursday in Medford.

Meeting Thursday evening for the second of three planned gubernatorial debates, Democratic Gov. Kate Brown and Republican state Rep. Knute Buehler were more willing to attack each other's record than when they faced off two nights before.

On a wide array of issues, Brown and Buehler set forth at the Medford event to build a narrative about their opponent.

As he has since spring, Buehler questioned Brown's "status-quo" leadership, saying she's failed the state on important issues like education, homelessness and overall stewardship of public dollars.

"This is an issue that has to be dealt with," Buehler said of the state's lagging school system, the central issue of his campaign. "(Brown is) not willing to spend the political capital to tell her biggest supporters that this problem has to be fixed."

Brown hit back, painting her opponent as a political chameleon whose campaign trail promises on issues like immigration and gun control don't match his nearly four

years in the state Legislature.

"I feel like I'm running against two candidates: Rep. Buehler and candidate Buehler," Brown said.

Despite the occasional barbs, the debate was cordial — and packed more substance than style points from the two candidates. In an hour, moderators from Medford's KOB-TV managed to cover issues that included transportation, gun control, natural disasters, drug addiction and homelessness.

Throughout it all, the one-minute answer format allowed the candidates to largely stick to talking

points. But Brown and Buehler also took nearly every opportunity to rebut.

Missing from the debate was Independent Party candidate Patrick Starnes, who'd participated two nights earlier. The event's sponsor declined to include Starnes, saying surveys showed he didn't meet a threshold of support from 10 percent of voters.

When discussion turned to the state's problematic public pension system, the candidates were asked to rate it as an item of concern on a scale of one to 10. Costs for paying down a \$22 bil-

lion unfunded liability in the system increasingly eat up money that could otherwise go to other services, such as public education.

Brown rated the problem an eight, but attacked Buehler's suggestion that public employees be required to pay into the system with money that, today, goes into personal retirement accounts.

"I don't think it's appropriate that we cut retirements of our hardworking Oregonians, like firefighters," Brown said.

Buehler, who has pledged meaningful reforms to the

system, rated its problems a nine on the scale.

"This is an issue that has to be dealt with," he said. "It's an issue that, unfortunately, Gov. Brown has not led on."

In one of the more telling exchanges of the night, the candidates were asked to name a program they'd cut or shrink to help balance the state's next budget, which may face a sizable shortfall.

Buehler, who's declined to answer the same question with specifics in the recent past, didn't hesitate to say he'd cut a clean fuels program that requires the use of gasoline that emits less carbon dioxide. Buehler earned enemies in the state's environmental community for voting against that program in 2015, but he insisted on Thursday that groups like the Sierra Club oppose similar programs because of concerns about the environmental impacts of ethanol.

Brown, on the other hand, refused to single out a program for budget cuts.

"I will work with Republicans and Democrats to make sure that we are making investments in our education system," she said when pressed.

"I don't believe you can cut your way to a better

education system."

When talk turned to earthquake preparedness, Brown touted the passage of a \$5.3 billion revenue package last year for transportation projects statewide, a package Buehler opposed.

"I don't know what he was going to use to fix the Medford viaduct," Brown said, playing to the Southern Oregon crowd watching on their televisions. "Maybe Scotch tape."

Buehler explained: "I voted no for the transportation package for some very important reasons. One is it was too small. It wasn't enough."

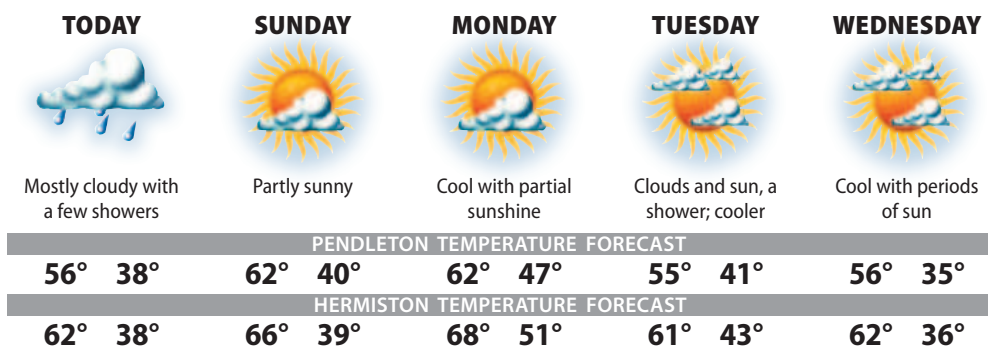
As she did on Tuesday, Brown attacked Buehler for voting against two gun control provisions that have become state law: one that allows courts to take guns away from people deemed a threat, and another that expands background checks.

Buehler, a gun owner, said he supported "common sense" gun control measures like outlawing bump stocks, creating a three-day waiting period to buy handguns, and increasing the legal age to purchase "assault weapons" to 21.

The candidates will meet for their final debate Tuesday in Portland.

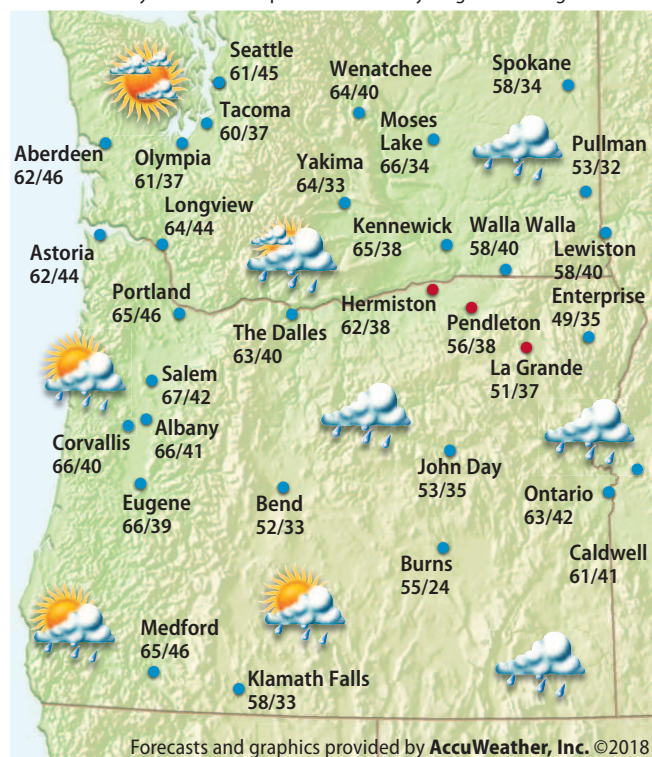
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## OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



## ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	58°	38°
Normals	69°	43°
Records	92° (1980)	25° (1916)

PRECIPITATION	24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.01"	
Normal month to date	0.16"	
Year to date	6.53"	
Last year to date	12.34"	
Normal year to date	9.10"	

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.	TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	58°	34°	
Normals	70°	41°	
Records	87° (1958)	25° (2012)	

PRECIPITATION	24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	Trace	
Normal month to date	0.09"	
Year to date	5.15"	
Last year to date	7.04"	
Normal year to date	6.65"	

WINDS (in mph)	Today	Sun.
Boardman	N 4-8	SW 4-8
Pendleton	NW 6-12	W 4-8

SUN AND MOON	7:00 a.m.
Sunrise today	7:00 a.m.
Sunset tonight	6:26 p.m.
Moonrise today	3:44 a.m.
Moonset today	5:39 p.m.

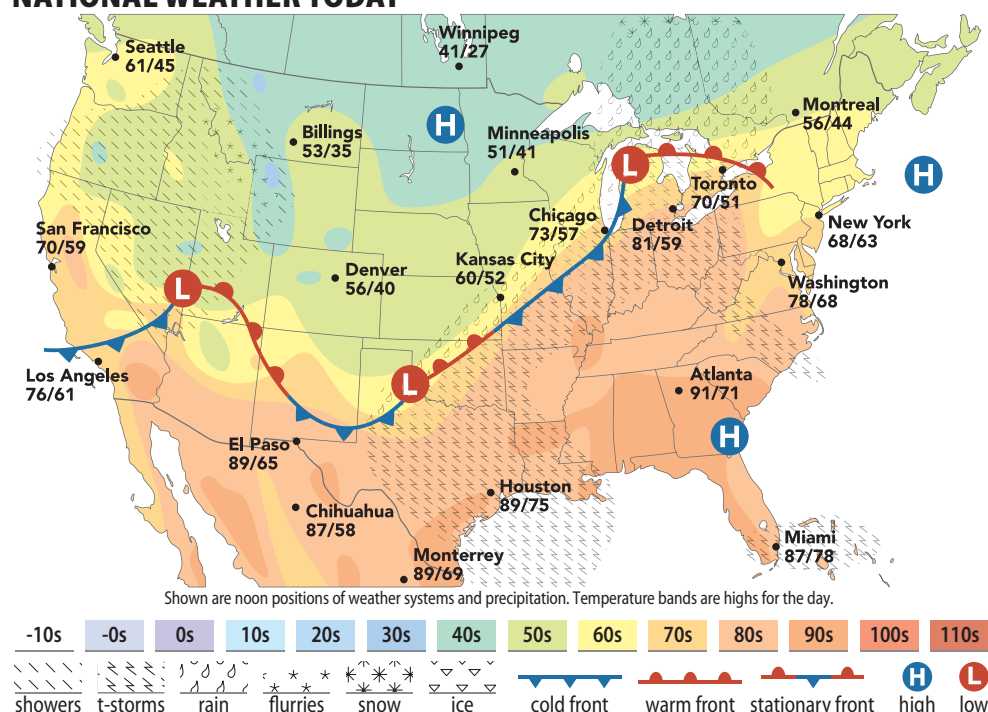
	New	First	Full	Last
	Oct 8	Oct 16	Oct 24	Oct 31

## NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 97° in Clarksdale, Miss. Low 11° in Bodie State Park, Calif.

## NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



## Federal administrator accused of touching employee in Oregon

BEND (AP) — Prosecutors in Oregon have charged the head of the Washington state office for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service after he was accused of touching and exposing himself to a female co-worker during a summer conference.

Eric Rickerson, 52, faces six counts, including coercion, third-degree sex abuse, harassment and indecency in Deschutes County Circuit Court, *The Bend Bulletin* reported.

Coercion is a felony in Oregon punishable by up to five years in prison. The other charges against Rickerson are misdemeanors.

Prosecutors allege that Rickerson, who lives in Olympia, Washington, touched the woman's chest and thigh without her consent

and exposed himself to her on July 9 during a drunken incident in Sunriver, Oregon.

"We allege that he was trying to coerce his victim into a sexual act that she did not want to engage in," Deschutes County District Attorney John Hummel told the newspaper.

Rickerson declined to comment to the newspaper when reached by phone. His lawyer, Casey Baxter, did not immediately return a message Friday from The Associated Press seeking comment.

Rickerson is the state supervisor for the federal agency's Washington state office in Lacey.

A 2015 agency news release announcing his position noted he would oversee about 115 employees and offices that manage nat-

ural resources issues through Washington.

Fish and Wildlife spokesman Gavin Shire in Virginia told the AP the federal agency has taken "appropriate administrative steps." Shire declined to elaborate on what those steps were and on Rickerson's current status, citing personnel matters.

In court Thursday in Bend, Circuit Judge Stephen Forte ordered Rickerson to have no contact with the woman. Rickerson was conditionally released.

A female Fish and Wildlife employee contacted the federal agency's inspector general to report that an incident took place when the two stayed in the same rental house in Sunriver over the summer, the newspaper reported.

## Town hall to discuss Special Olympics

East Oregonian

Britt Oase, Special Olympics Oregon's new CEO, will be on hand to discuss updates with the program.

Town hall meetings are being held across the state in the wake of the financial difficulties reported in the late spring. The nonprofit organization canceled several events, including the 2018 Summer Games. Oase will share her vision for the future of Special Olympics, as well as

work being done in the last three months to build a sustainable organization.

The local meeting — encompassing Special Olympics programs in Hermiston-Pendleton, Milton-Freewater, and Baker, Grant and Union counties — is Wednesday, Oct. 10 from 6-8 p.m. at The Salvation Army, 150 S.E. Emigrant Ave., Pendleton. Athletes, their families, coaches and Special Olympics supporters are encouraged to attend. Special Olympics pro-

vides year-round athletic training and sports competitions for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. There is no charge for athletes to participate. For more information about the Hermiston-Pendleton program, contact Kristi Smalley at 541-567-1546 or smalleys@eotnet.net.

For more about the state organization or the town hall meeting, contact info@soor.org, 503-248-0600 or visit www.soor.org.

## Sheriff apologizes for deputies' comment

PORTLAND (AP) — Clackamas County Sheriff Craig Roberts has criticized "callous comments" that three of his deputies made on cellphone videos while an inmate was in a padded jail cell and flailing around uncontrollably from a drug overdose.

The *Oregonian*/OregonLive reports he said two of the deputies were disciplined

and the third who took the videos resigned. The sheriff didn't describe the type of discipline.

He also apologized to the inmate's family in his statement, now nearly two years after the encounter.

The sheriff released two videos a day after *The Oregonian*/OregonLive made a public records request

for them and wrote about a wrongful death lawsuit filed this week in U.S. District Court in Portland by the inmate's mother and estate.

The suit referenced the videos showing inmate Bryan Perry as he was locked in a padded cell at Clackamas County Jail after his probation violation arrest on Nov. 3, 2016. Perry later died.

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