

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Murdock for Commissioner

Five months ago, Rick Pullen got Umatilla County's attention.

A former employee and manager in the Taxation and Assessment Department, Pullen made his bid for county commissioner and earned 31 percent of the vote — enough when paired with fellow challenger Tom Bailor's 24 percent to keep popular incumbent George Murdock from gliding into a second term.

Now it's a two-man race for the seat, and Pullen needs to prove he's not only serious about the job but capable of doing it.

He's staked his position as a big thinker with ambitious ideas for the county, while Murdock is running on his experience as an administrator and track record during his time on the Board of Commissioners.

Our endorsement in the May run-off was for Murdock, and despite Pullen's growth as a candidate in the months since, it hasn't been enough to change our mind.

Murdock had a distinguished career in education, leading large school and service districts before his first election to the Board of Commissioners. It must also be noted that he was the publisher of the *East Oregonian* from 2007-09.

Upon arriving in the commissioner's office he got to work streamlining the county operation, leading the effort to remove unnecessary administration and solve problems as they arrived. A recent example was his deft handling of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, an awkward co-op of



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Umatilla County Commissioner George Murdock answers a question as challenger Rick Pullen looks on during the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce candidate forum on Oct. 13 at BMCC in Hermiston.

the county and the city of Hermiston destined to cause problems under long-term co-management.

Murdock wasn't involved with the genesis of the project, but realized that the county's only real interest in the facility was as a place to host the fair. He reached out to Hermiston leaders to develop a hand-off deal that would give control of EOTEC to the city while securing it as a long-term home for the fair.

The deal also promised county money coming from Hermiston's Lamb Weston expansion toward infrastructure for a Hermiston housing development.

That kind of negotiation resulting in a win-win deal doesn't happen by accident. Murdock not only has strong connections throughout the county (and beyond), he knows how to leverage them to get directly at a problem.

Pullen, an Army veteran with experience in the private sector, worked his way up through the ranks of the assessor's office to middle management. His departure in 2017 and decision to run for the office in 2018 are no coincidence. He has criticized county leadership for laying off employees and claims he would have done whatever necessary to keep

people in those jobs.

As with many of his plans, Pullen hasn't been able to articulate how he would proceed. Being able to add patrol deputies to the sheriff's office, for instance, was only possible by making cuts elsewhere in the county. The give and take is part of the budget process, and frankly part of good government.

While campaigning, Pullen often says a problem needs looking into, but doesn't offer a specific path forward. At this point in his charge for the office we'd expect more concrete answers. Same goes for his big picture proposals like getting more water out of the Columbia for west-end irrigators and connecting more veterans and homeless people to services. Raising the idea is one thing, finding a way to make it happen is another.

County commissioner is a big job that comes with a full-time salary. The learning curve is steep. Though Pullen says his years in the county's employ has prepared him for it, we're not entirely convinced. Pullen might one day be suited for the job, but we'd like to see him do some more research and come with a more complete and specific idea for how he would lead.

Meantime, Murdock's track record in the courthouse and reputation throughout the county has earned him another term, which he has said will be his last. We believe he will again use it to find tangible solutions and responsible answers for Umatilla County.

YOUR VIEWS

Jamie is for the people, not PACS

I am voting for Jamie McLeod-Skinner. There are a number of reasons why one should vote for Jamie over the Republican candidate, but I think their respective website names reveal all you need to know.

The Republican candidate web name is GregWalden.com. It is about the man, and the corporations and political PACs that support him. The McLeod-Skinner web name is JamieforOregon.com; in other words, Jamie for people.

Corporations don't need health care. Children, families, and senior citizens do need dependable health care. Corporations don't need clean air to breath and safe water to drink, but people do. Super-rich political PAC donors do not need another representative in Washington, D.C. We, the people, need Jamie to represent us in Congress.

Remember, JamieforOregon means Jamie for people, not corporations and PACs. Vote for Jamie McLeod Skinner.

John Spomer
Hermiston

Murdock has proven leadership

Please join me in supporting George Murdock for county commissioner. George has clearly demonstrated the leadership, temperament and necessary skills to effectively serve Umatilla County.

As chairperson of the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners and as the Umatilla County Budget officer, he is responsible for managing a \$78.7M county budget, which has benefited our citizens in many ways. A small example of responsible fiscal management was seen by paying off the Hansell Building three years early.



Space constraints for this letter limit the extensive list of George's accomplishments but a few more examples include: the development of a new annual budget process, the resurrection of the Drug Court, his leadership in developing an atmosphere of harmony and cooperation between the sheriff's office and the board of commissioners, thereby creating plans to double the number of road deputies for Umatilla County and providing 24/7 coverage.

George is a community builder, working with the city of Pendleton and private interests to reuse the historic Eighth Street Bridge into a community gathering place; working with the city of Hermiston to provide new infrastructure creating new housing in northern Hermiston; working county-wide to create a regional transportation system to transport workers, students, and those needing public transportation from points between Boardman, La Grande, Tri-Cities and Walla Walla; and working with veteran's services doubling the number of services provided and providing leadership to honor WWII and Korean War veterans.

Umatilla County is in very

good shape and on a solid path to the future. We need the continued mature and proven leadership George Murdock brings to the county. Your vote to keep him in office will go a long way to ensure this continues success.

Chuck Wood
Pendleton

Vote Buehler for governor

We are proud to join *The Oregonian* with our endorsement of Representative Knute Buehler for governor. We both have had the privilege of working with Rep. Buehler in the legislature, and are confident that he has what it takes to tackle the issues facing Oregon.

From PERS reform to homelessness, Buehler has shown that he has the knowledge, the ability, and the guts to address the biggest issues facing Oregonians today. While Democrats have held power in this state, we have watched our kids fall behind the national average, our PERS unfunded liability continue to rise, and precious resources burn. We believe it is time for a change in the governor's office, and we believe that Buehler has what it takes.

Please join us in voting Knute Buehler for governor!

Senator Bill Hansell and
Representative Greg Barreto

Vote for Buehler, Walden

When I look at our upcoming election, I certainly would like to see nothing change the fantastic economy we have seen in the last 18 months with more working — every single category of the labor force has a lower unemployment number than seen in 40 years. Keep this success rolling!

We need to keep Greg Walden in the House of Representatives, and we need to not have any more corrupt governors in Oregon. *Willamette Week* has exposed Gov. Brown's corruption; for further information look up Project Veritas Action, then join me in voting for Knute Buehler for governor.

When I look at the measures, I would vote no on 102 and yes on all the rest. Thomas Jefferson once said "to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves is sinful and tyrannical."

Measure 106 seeks to restore the rights of those who disagree with abortion by not forcing them to pay for it, while not destroying the rights of those who do approve of it and are free to donate their own money to their cause. I greatly respect the wisdom of our founding fathers, and think we should apply Thomas Jefferson's wisdom to this issue.

Please vote!

Granelia Thompson
Weston

Walden has crucial experience

We would like to take a moment to thank Representative Greg Walden for his tireless work on behalf of Oregon communities

and residents. His willingness to meet with the people of Oregon, listen to and address concerns is more than appreciated. A visit to his Facebook page showcases a man dedicated to meeting with residents, addressing and resolving their concerns and staying accessible.

He has introduced and worked to pass legislation that covers the very things that Oregonians hold closest to their hearts. Not only as residents have we benefited from Greg's work but our farmers, ranchers, medical services (both providers and patients), broadband technologies, veterans, small business owners and Oregon industry have been supported, represented and encouraged by Greg's long-standing devotion to our great state. His success is even more substantial given the level of opposition he faces in the current majority leadership in Salem.

In watching the previously streamed debate between Greg and his opponent Jamie McLeod-Skinner only served to cement the fact that Walden is best suited to serve our state. His experience and his history speak volumes above a candidate with no working experience but lots of ideas about how things should be done. His opponent seems to have lots of ideas about what should be done with no plans, knowledge or experience in making those things happen. This is not a time in Oregon for experimenting with trial and error and hoping for the best. We need boots on the ground, established relationships, experience and common sense in how we move forward.

Managing our resources, caring for our residents, supporting industry and the ability to get things done are vital. That is who Greg Walden is and that is why we support him in continuing in the role as our representative.

Thank you, Greg Walden.

Mark and Tina Cave
Pendleton

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