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OUR VIEW

Paulus blazed trails in Oregon politics

Former Secretary of State Norma Paulus was a product of rural Oregon. She exemplified what individuals can do when given a chance — conquering poverty, polio and the lack of a college degree to emerge as one of Oregon’s most influential politicians.

And Paulus did so during an era in which she typically was “The Only Woman in the Room,” the title of her autobiography.

Paulus died Feb. 28, two days after another Republican secretary of state, Dennis Richardson. U.S. Rep. Greg Walden and state Sen. Betsy Johnson remarked at Richardson’s recent funeral that Paulus set the standard for her successors, regardless of political affiliation.

Both were strong, independent, transformative leaders, said Republican Walden, who represents Oregon’s 2nd Congressional District.

Democrat Johnson added that Paulus and Richardson placed the needs of Oregon ahead of their own political party. “Norma blazed her own trail and was one tough cookie,” Johnson said.

Paulus would have turned 86 on March 13, but hers certainly was a life well-lived. She was the first woman elected to statewide office in Oregon and the last Republican secretary of state until Richardson.

Norma Jean Petersen was born during the Depression to a Nebraska farm family who eventually settled



Statesman Journal/Timothy J. Gonzalez, File
Norma Paulus, then Superintendent of Public Education, reads to children at the Salem Public Library on Tuesday, Nov. 18, 1997.

near Burns in Eastern Oregon, seeking a better life.

But the family’s poverty kept her from attending college after graduating from Burns High School at age 17. Instead, she became a secretary for the Harney County district attorney. Then polio struck and she endured weeks of treatment in an iron lung. After recovering, she moved to Salem, where she went to work as a legal secretary for Chief Justice Earl Latourette of the Oregon Supreme Court.

She so impressed Latourette that he

urged her to become a lawyer despite not being a college graduate. She studied part-time at the Willamette University law school while still working full-time at the Supreme Court and also being married with a young child. Her husband, Bill Paulus, whom she met at law school, eventually borrowed money from an uncle so she could quit her job and be a full-time law student.

It was a productive investment. In 1962, Norma Paulus graduated from law school with honors. Her marriage

to Bill lasted 40 years until his death in 1999. Although Bill Paulus stayed in the background politically, he was a well-regarded lawyer in his own right, known for his work with school districts.

A legislator before being elected secretary of state in 1976, Norma Paulus was fearless. She stood up to the followers of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, who tried to rig Wasco County elections by busing in homeless people to register as voters, and who contaminated salad bars in The Dalles to sicken other voters.

Later as the state’s elected superintendent of public instruction, Paulus took on teacher unions and others who questioned her vision for school reform.

All the while, she carried a deep affection for the vastness of her state, from the coast to the mountains and the rangelands of Eastern Oregon. Everywhere she went, people seemed to know her on a first-name basis.

Paulus lost the 1986 election for governor to Democrat Neil Goldschmidt, and the Oregon Republican Party soon moved on from the centrist approach she represented – fiscally conservative and socially liberal.

As her obituary said, “She leaves a legacy of independence, fierce respect for the integrity of democratic institutions and willingness to engage adversaries or even friends in standing up for what she thought right.”

Her rural values served all of Oregon.

OTHER VIEWS

A permanent solution to net neutrality

Across our country, approximately 23 million Americans living in rural areas lack sufficient access to the internet. Many of these people are our friends and neighbors right here in Eastern Oregon, who are not connected to the single most important driver of economic growth, job creation, and a better quality of life.

Bridging this digital divide in Oregon is a top priority of mine as an internet service provider. This is something that I highlighted during a hearing before the Energy and Commerce Committee in Washington, D.C., last month, when Representative Greg Walden invited me to testify about the importance of a free and open internet for rural broadband expansion. As Congress continues to debate the future of the internet this week, I’d like to share my perspective as a small ISP working in Eastern Oregon.

For underserved communities in our part of the state, small ISPs like Eastern Oregon Telecom are on the front lines connecting rural areas with high-speed broadband. Unfortunately, as ISPs much larger than mine and giant internet companies like Netflix and YouTube were arguing over the terms of their traffic focused primarily on our country’s largest cities, the Obama Administration came down on the side of the Silicon Valley companies. The end result was the unelected former chairman of the Federal Communications Commission instituting heavy-handed, one-size-fits-all regulations that hurt small



JOSEPH FRANELL
COMMENT

ISPs, including EOT. This in turn hurt our ability to expand broadband to underserved communities.

Case in point is the 2015 net neutrality rule that regulated internet service under Title II of the Communications Act, which was originally used to govern monopoly telephone companies in the 1930s. While Title II sounds innocuous, this rule gave big government unlimited authority to micromanage every single aspect of a provider’s business, including rate fixing, taxing the internet, and even censoring content.

For EOT and other small ISPs, there is nothing neutral about this kind of authority. Net neutrality shifted EOT’s focus from our customers to regulatory interference and the draining cost of reporting and compliance. Every dollar we spend reporting to regulatory agencies is a dollar not available to invest in new infrastructure to serve rural Eastern Oregon.

Since the repeal of net neutrality, we have been able to focus on providing exceptional service and expanding into other underserved markets. And while the relief from the heavy hand of net neutrality is welcome, the prospect of a new administration reinstating Title II regulations over the internet is not.

The uncertainty of net neutrality rules ping-ponging between Republican and Democrat administrations needs to end. That’s where Congress comes in.

Fortunately, as I learned while testifying before Congress, Republicans and Democrats actually agree on the key parameters of a free and open internet. A

permanent, bipartisan legislative solution to net neutrality is the best path forward. There are three bills that have been introduced by Republicans on the House Energy and Commerce committee that will accomplish that goal.

Representative Walden introduced legislation that codifies into law permanent prohibitions on blocking, throttling, and paid prioritization for internet traffic, and requires that ISPs be transparent in their network management practices and prices.

Representative Bob Latta, from Ohio, introduced a bill that includes important net neutrality protections without reclassifying broadband into the Title II framework that is overly burdensome and can harm investment in broadband expansion that we have seen in Oregon. This legislation is drawn directly from a bill that the last Democratic chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee proposed in 2010.

Representative Cathy McMorris-Rodgers, from Washington State, has introduced legislation that mirrors a state law from our neighbor to the north that also prohibits blocking, throttling, and paid prioritization. This bill was passed by a Democratic legislature in Washington and signed into law by a Democratic governor.

I am encouraged that there is broad agreement on permanent net neutrality protections that can be solidified into law through legislation. And I’m encouraged that Representative Walden is committed to capitalize on this opportunity for real bipartisan action.

Joseph Franell is the CEO of Eastern Oregon Telecom, based in Hermiston.

OTHER VIEWS

Public records are your records

Public records are documents made by a government agency which are required to be kept and maintained.

Reporters love them. They form the backbone of many news stories. A reporter’s pay can be based on drumming up stories, so public records are of great value. Watch the newsroom waters churn when juicy public records are thrown in! Political scandal, big names, big money, controversy, sex or violence! Hold on to your boat! Those fish bite hard, man!

Reporters can do a whole story on a public record. Example: A psychiatrist gets his license revoked by the state for having sex with a patient. Oh, that’s a good one – story! Hold the press! Translate the legalese into everyday English, get a couple of comments from participants and it might be on the front page the next day.

“Unnamed sources”, “it was reported”, “some people say” – just can’t compare to the black and white of a mug shot, lawsuit or your mayor’s e-mails – all public records.

Attorneys love them. They can be a primary source of evidence. Peruse any lawsuit and you will see attorneys demanding the other side produce documents. The code language of attorneys, Latin, even has a phrase for demanding documents, *Subpoena duces tecum*: “A command for a witness to appear in court and produce documents.” As soon as the documents are entered into the court file they become a public record.



KENNETH KRAMER
COMMENT

Private investigators love them. They are an essential element of some investigative agencies. By checking public records alone, an investigator can find criminal histories, lawsuits, property, habits, whereabouts, affiliations, reputation, or character of his target.

Some legislators hate them — apparently. They dream up legislation to hide public records.

They’re constantly proposing iron walls to whittle away citizens’ rights to public records. This week you will see newspapers across the country pointing out laws and bills that restrict access to public records.

But reporters, attorneys, private investigators do not have a monopoly on public records.

There’s a reason they are called “public records.”

They are yours. Paid for by your tax dollars. Court records, property records, the e-mails of your local mayor. The list goes on.

Just dream up the record you’d like to obtain. If you don’t know whether it exists just ask the city, county, state or federal agency for it.

If a government agency withholds a public record it is their responsibility to tell you why.

Good luck to you in your research!

Kenneth Kramer is a private investigator and public records expert. His website, *PsychSearch.net*, a research division of *DataSearch, Inc.*, has the world’s largest collection of public records on psychiatrists.