

# Cancer: Weston mayor shares her battle with cancer over the internet

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eventually forming another tumor that pushed against her colon. She is going through chemo, again, to shrink a tumor on her liver that is so overtaxed, bile salts are coming out through her skin.

She said her kidneys are compromised, too, from the chemotherapy. But, for now, it's the chemo that will keep her alive. At this point, McClure-Spurgeon said, she is traveling to the University of Washington Medical Center every three weeks for palliative care.

"I went to Tri-Cities for chemo last time," McClure-Spurgeon said. "The reason I chose Seattle this time is because my liver and kidney numbers are so in flux — if there are any sudden changes, the doctors there are used to seeing strange things all the time."

McClure-Spurgeon said the chemo is supposed to make her feel better by the second week of treatment. Right now, though, she said her pain is a steady "7" on a scale of 1 to 10. Her ability to eat depends on how well her liver is functioning. She said her appetite comes and goes, and with the aid of anti-nausea medication she is able to eat small portions.

She's also fighting fatigue, weakness and dizziness.

"It is such an extent going to the bathroom I almost



EO file photo

**Weston Mayor Jennifer McClure-Spurgeon, right, goes on a walking tour of the area around Athena-Weston Middle School in 2017 with Nick Foster, a senior planner with Kittelson & Associates Inc. of Boise, Idaho. The daughter of longtime Union County Commissioner Steve McClure and an Elgin native, McClure-Spurgeon was diagnosed with cervical cancer a month after taking office as a Weston City Council member in 2013.**

pass out going back to bed," she said.

Despite the struggle, she is able to maintain her job as mayor, working over

the phone and going into city hall to sign checks. McClure-Spurgeon said the council has been a big help and thanks to a well-defined

list of priorities, the city has been able to tackle its to-do list.

"We have some pretty cut-and-dried plans for what

is happening over the next year or two," she said.

Battling cancer can become an educational experience — for the patient and

the family. McClure-Spurgeon said she started writing everything down in a notebook when she was going through chemo treatments in Tri-Cities.

"I've written down every blood draw since we started this crazy odyssey," McClure-Spurgeon said. "The nice thing about having my husband at appointments is he can remember all the questions we talked through and pick up the slack where I may have forgotten."

Mostly homebound and with a fragile immune system, McClure-Spurgeon said even her grandchildren and daughter, who live down the street, can't visit her if they have a cold or cough. To keep people up-to-date on her status, this last go-around with cancer treatment she is documenting on the Internet.

"I went public with this second round on Facebook, posting video feeds every week so people have a way to talk through what's happening," she said.

Besides breaking through her isolation with social media, McClure-Spurgeon said her leadership training taught her that one of our life's purposes is to add value to others.

"Major illnesses are such a drain on family and resources," she said. "It is a comfort that I was adding value while going through something so horrible."

# Politicians: Democrats appear eager to reclaim the seat they lost in 2016

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"I believe that we are at a point where our democracy and voting rights are under attack across this country," Williamson said. "I'm running because we are in a fight, I believe, to save our democracy."

The candidates are already shaping their personal narratives into smooth pitches.

McLeod-Skinner, who made headlines for traversing thousands of miles of rural Oregon in a Jeep in her bid for Congress, said she's the candidate who would give voice to the state's rural interests.

Williamson casts herself as the "proven progressive" who championed a list of state policies in her time as a representative and leader of the House Democrats.

Hass is the legislative taskmaster who would implement what he thinks is a sorely needed "overhaul" of an office filled by four secretaries in the past four years.

Smith is the self-styled "fresh voice," claiming he is the only candidate with executive experience because he managed two state agencies.

Smith just recently joined the race so he's not yet reported his campaign finances. His opponents have been steadily collecting cash since September, according to state campaign finance records.

"There will be a lot of

shared policies, I think, across all of the candidates," Smith said. "But nobody, I think, that brings both that military experience, that veteran experience and that executive office experience to be able to hit the ground running and actually implement, and implement them well, all the different initiatives that we're going to be talking about this campaign."

The secretary of state oversees state elections and archives, registers businesses and assesses the inner workings of state government through audits.

Bill Bradbury, secretary of state from 1999 to early 2009, said the post is a bit of a dichotomy — it has functions that Democrats and Republicans tend to value, such as running fair elections.

But it's also a political job since the secretary is in succession to the governor.

"On one hand, it's considered an important partisan office," Bradbury said. "On the other hand, all the duties, really, of the secretary of state are essentially nonpartisan."

Secretary of state is a more prominent post in Oregon than in some other states, where the duty is primarily as chief elections officer, said Bill Lunch, professor emeritus in political science at Oregon State University.

"It's been an important office because we do not have a lieutenant governor in Oregon," Lunch said. "There

have been occasions, not common, but every once in a while, where the secretary of state becomes governor."

It's also the only open seat among the statewide offices in 2020.

Dennis Richardson, a Republican who broke Democrats' three-decade streak in the job in 2016, died in office and his appointed replacement, Bev Clarno, isn't seeking election to the office.

No Republican has announced for the job. Clarno's deputy, former legislator Rich Vial, wouldn't comment on reports he was considering a run.

Julie Parrish, a former state representative from the Tualatin area, said she would prefer to support another candidate but isn't ruling out a run herself.

So for the moment, the contest among Democrats may matter most to deciding the next secretary of state.

"It's not quite the case in Oregon that the primary is the election, but it's close," Lunch said.

"Generally speaking, the Democratic nomination is going to be the most, by far, the most important choice that the voters will make because the Republicans are so weak in the general election context, usually," Lunch said.

Prior to Richardson, the last Republican to hold the office was Norma Paulus, whose term ended in 1985.

The job hasn't been a political stepping stone in recent years. Brown moved to the governorship from secretary of state because of the resignation of John Kitzhaber. In the past, Mark Hatfield went on to become governor and then U.S. senator. Tom McCall, too, held the office before winning the governor's office.

"It does raise your profile when you are the secretary of state," said Jim Moore, associate professor and director of political outreach at the Tom McCall Center for Civic Engagement at Pacific University. "It does put you in the mix to be governor. But we just don't see the same culture of that happening that we did from the '30s through the early '90s."

Democrats appear eager to reclaim the seat they lost in 2016.

Democratic nominee Brad Avakian "was a controversial figure who had done some things that had alienated some of his natural supporters," said Lunch.

Already, some overlap is emerging in the policies that the candidates are proposing: For instance, many emphasize the need to buttress the state's elections security.

But, as a measure to allow limits on campaign donations also heads to the ballot, a potential pact among the Democratic candidates to agree to a specific dollar limit from donors fell through.

"Each of them have their own strong points to emphasize ... How that's going to play out, my guess is that Williamson and Hass will have some advantage because they come from the Portland area, which is where a very large fraction, certainly not all, but a large fraction of the voters are," said Lunch.

McLeod-Skinner, who lives in rural Central Oregon and serves on the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, as well as the Jefferson County Education Service District board, emphasizes her rural background.

"With all due respect to my colleagues from major urban areas, we have different and unique challenges and issues throughout our state," McLeod-Skinner said. "And I think it's really important to have a full understanding of that to make sure that government is functioning well and serving all Oregonians."

Hass, a veteran legislator, has proposed several policy initiatives, such as ranked-choice voting, which allows voters to list multiple candidates in order of preference, rather than selecting just one for each office.

"It's really important to me in this election that my campaign is driven by policies and ideas to ramp up the profile of this office to help more Oregonians," Hass said. "And I think I can do that. I don't like to see people struggle. I think the secretary of

state has statutory tools to help vulnerable people by protecting their elections and speaking up for them when they need help."

Smith casts himself as a nontraditional candidate, one with experience running state agencies, but who also is open to weighing policies like allowing 17-year-olds to vote in school board elections.

In announcing his candidacy, Smith said he could unite Oregonians in an era of sharp political polarization.

"I think there is a hunger for a fresh voice and a new energy," Smith said. "But also that citizens want to know that that same person is going to be able to hit the ground running and brings the experience to actually deliver on what they're touting throughout this campaign."

Williamson is keen on expanding access to the ballot and wants to have the state agencies besides Oregon DMV register voters, provide for election day voter registration, and provide more election materials in languages other than English.

"Oregonians deserve a secretary of state, a strong secretary of state with a proven record of fighting for fairness in systems for everyone," Williamson said. "And that means fighting for policies that ensure our elections are clean and fair, and removing barriers so that all eligible voters have access to the ballot."

# Charity: Because of homophobia, LGBTQ youths are more likely to be homeless

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services, such as emergency shelter. The organization points to its practice of hiring openly gay employees and that it offers the same benefits to employees in same-sex marriages as it does to all married employees.

The organization states due to homophobia, youth who identify as LGBTQ are more likely to be homeless, making up as much as 40% of the country's homeless youth population. The Salvation Army assists them with food, clothing, shelter and counseling resources.

"We serve more than 23 million individuals a year, including those in the LGBTQ+ community. In fact, we believe we are the largest provider of poverty relief to the LGBTQ+ population," The Salvation Army said in a statement respond-

ing to Chick-fil-A's decision to not donate to the organization in 2020. "When misinformation is perpetuated without fact, our ability to serve those in need, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or any other factor, is at risk."

Morris said all donations made to red kettles and events, such as The Salvation Army's red kettle kickoff fundraising dinner, stay locally, supporting programs like meals for the homeless that The Salvation Army provides in Pendleton six days a week. Even if someone makes an online donation, the money stays within the ZIP code associated with the credit card used to pay.

"You're able to give right in your community," she said.

Morris said a volunteer bell ringer will on aver-

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— The Salvation Army

age bring in enough money in one hour to pay for 13 meals for a homeless member of their community. Major DeWayne Hallstad of the Pendleton Salvation Army told the *East Oregonian* earlier this year there were 73 people at a meal the previous day.

"We urge the public to seek the truth before rushing to ill-informed judgment and greatly appreciate those partners and donors

who ensure that anyone who needs our help feels safe and comfortable to come through our doors," The Salvation Army stated.

In 2019, Chick-fil-A donated \$115,000 to The Salvation Army for its Angel Tree program, which provides Christmas gifts for children, and \$1.65 million to the Fellowship of Christian Athletes to pay for underprivileged youths to attend sports camps at

historically black universities, such as Morehouse College.

Rod Bragato of Hermiston, who supervises the Umatilla and Morrow County chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, said the money Chick-fil-A has donated to the organization in the past has stayed on the other side of the country and not been used to fund programs locally.

"The issue is really irrelevant to us," he said.

Locally, the FCA offers optional religious devotionals to student athletes after practices, hosts athletic activities, such as broom hockey, and offers weekend camps. Bragato said they serve about 300 students on a weekly basis.

The organization has been criticized for the "statement of faith" on its

website, which says, in part, that sexual relations should only happen within marriage and that marriage is "exclusively the union of one man and one woman" and that leaders must agree to follow teachings on sexual purity.

Bragato said despite the national organization's religious beliefs, local students are never turned away for being LGBTQ and he has not been instructed by the organization to do so.

"Anyone can come," he said. "I don't think anyone is discriminated against."

Instead of donating smaller amounts to a long list of organizations as it has in years past, Chick-fil-A plans to donate a total of \$9 million in 2020 to Covenant House International, Junior Achievements USA and food banks in areas where its restaurants are located.