

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Clarno gets it right again

Oregon Secretary of State Bev Clarno rejected two initiative petitions on Thursday, Dec. 19, because they included more than one topic. It's the second time this year she's told would-be petition sponsors they must stick to the state's single-subject rule, which says petitions must be limited to only one change.

Clarno won the first case, which involved three proposed initiatives, in Marion County Circuit Court in late November, though the ruling is being challenged in the Court of Appeals.

Last week, Clarno tossed out Initiative Petitions 48 and 49 for the same reason she denied the earlier pair.

The two measures are roughly identical. Each would require that all electricity sold in Oregon be from renewable sources and carbon-free resources. That is, presumably, what really matters to the folks at Renew Oregon, who are push-



EO Media Group file photo

Secretary of State Bev Clarno has rejected two proposed ballot measures that would force Oregon to transition to carbon-free sources of electricity in the next 25 years.

ing the bills at least in part to make their goals law no matter what the 2020 Legislature does.

Unfortunately, the measures don't

stop there. They include all sorts of rules on working conditions, the sorts of things that are the result of labor negotiations, not a state-

wide vote. The rules cover everything from prevailing wage requirements to mandatory participation in apprenticeship programs and proof the utilities have a history of obeying existing state and federal wage and hour laws. And, during the switch to 100% renewables, utilities would be charged with working to see that everyone benefits from the switch.

They are, in other words, multifaceted proposals that deal with multiple subjects.

And that, the state constitution says in several places, is not the way the system works. The state constitution clearly says that "a proposed law or Amendment shall embrace one subject only and matters properly contained therein" [Article IV, Section 1 (2)(d)].

That's not particularly ambiguous language, in Clarno's view. The only judge to rule on the issue so far has seen it her way. With luck, a new round of judges will agree.

OTHER VIEWS

A fresh gesture of concern from the fellowship of the furrowed brow

Oh swell. The Republican Senate's so-called "moderates," who combine big talk with little action and fuse noble rhetoric with hapless inertia, appear to be readying themselves for another year of deeming certain Trump desecrations as "unhelpful" or "unwise."

One member of this club — which I call the Fellowship of the Furrowed Brow — spoke up recently. Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski said she's "disturbed" that Mitch McConnell is colluding backstage with the legal team of defendant Donald Trump in advance of his impeachment trial in the Senate.

Mainstream media outlets think this is big news. According to the *New York Times*, it's "a potentially significant crack in Republican unity." We'll see. To me, it sounds like the Furrowed Brow Fellowship's standard sponginess, the kind we've been getting for the past three years from Murkowski and Republican Senate colleagues like Mitt Romney, Susan Collins, Ben Sasse, Rob Portman, and Lamar Alexander.

First they mouth honeyed words, then (far more often than not) they vote with Trump and abet his abuses.

It's nice that Murkowski is "disturbed" that McConnell has "confused" the trial process. But it would truly serve the public interest if she and her furrowed-brow brethren denounced McConnell's goal of granting Trump a speedy exoneration. Under Senate rules, 51 senators (all 47 caucusing Democrats and a mere 4 Republicans) can set the terms of that trial.

That's what conservative Trump critics would love to see. Bill Kristol, the long-time conservative commentator and activist, co-writing with a University of Texas academic in a right-leaning online magazine, deftly frames the issue:

"If a bipartisan group of public-spirited constitutionalists on both sides of the aisle come together, they can tell McConnell that he will only get 51 votes ... if he works with them to fashion a fair process that allows for crucial documents to be compelled to be produced, and a reasonable number of witnesses to be called. ... The only way to get to that outcome is if some Senate Republicans refuse to lower themselves to be the mere agents of an unprincipled and partisan leader and instead rise to the demands of principle and statesmanship."

"Some Senate Republicans." He's referring to the Fellowship of the Furrowed Brow — which, Murkowski aside, has said very little about McConnell's determina-

tion to rig the game for Trump. Are they terrified that Trump will tweet at them? Are they scared of the grassroots Trumpists back home? Or is it basically because their "moderate" image is overblown, given the fact that as senators they vote their party the vast majority of the time?

I'll go with door number three. A recent vote serves as the perfect metaphor.

Back in October McConnell nominated, for a federal judgeship, a 37-year-old right-winger who'd been rated "unqualified" by the nonpartisan American Bar Association.

In the ABA's words, Justin Walker "does not presently have the requisite trial or litigation experience (and) has never tried a case as lead or co-counsel, whether civil or criminal."

No matter. Every member of the Furrowed Brow Fellowship — Murkowski, Romney, Sasse, Collins — voted to put Walker on the federal bench. Just as they've consistently abetted Trump's far-right takeover of the bench.

Sasse, in particular, has been verbally upset with Trump for a long time, but he has voted with Trump 86% of the time and voted (along with Collins and then-Furrowed Browist Jeff Flake) to put accused sexual assaulter Brett Kavanaugh on the Supreme Court.

One would think that confronting McConnell on the impeachment trial rules, and demanding witness testimony, would be easy calls. Those are popular positions. According to the latest Morning Consult/Politico poll, Americans — by a margin of 54 to 27% — want the Senate to bring in additional witnesses. Independents are on board, 51 to 27%. Even a plurality of Republicans are on board, 43 to 38%. Numbers like that have apparently inspired Murkowski to deem herself "disturbed" by the prospect of a rigged exoneration.

Yes, only four Republicans are needed to ensure a real trial. But that would require them to act, so what we're more likely to hear are various synonyms of "disturbed." Keep your ear cocked for these potential Furrowed Brow adjectives:

Concerned.
Troubled.
Puzzled.
Perturbed.
Disconcerted.
Unsettled.
Worried.

Is there room on that list for infuriated or outraged? Not on their watch.

Dick Polman is a nationally syndicated columnist.



Our Vietnam veterans are another year older, still without a capital city memorial

The United States of America Commemoration of the Vietnam War is currently ongoing. This national commemoration was authorized by Congress, established under the secretary of defense and launched by the president in May 2012. It will continue through Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 2025. This program commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War and recognizes all who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, regardless of location, during the period of Nov. 1, 1955, to May 15, 1975, as a Vietnam veteran.

While 2020 brings another year, our Vietnam veterans are a year older and there is still not a Vietnam War memorial in Oregon's capital city of Salem.

During the Vietnam War era, more than 9 million Americans served in the United States military. More than 2.7 million served in Vietnam, of which about 57,000 were Oregonians. It is estimated that a total of 180,000 from Oregon served during the Vietnam War era. Currently, it is estimated with data provided by the United States Census Bureau, that there about 100,000 Oregon Vietnam era veterans alive today.

The average age of our Vietnam veterans is now over 70. The Vietnam Veterans of America announced that the average age of their membership in 2019 was 72.

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs published a report that forecast 14,000 Oregon Vietnam veterans either have passed away or will die between 2015 and 2020 at a rate of 8 veterans per day.

It is inevitable that our Vietnam veterans will leave us.

Vietnam veteran and United Mine Workers of America, International Union President Cecil E. Roberts made this statement in March 2019: "With an estimated 390 Vietnam veterans passing each day there will be few, if any alive in 10 years."

The state of Oregon dedicated a beautiful World War II Memorial on the Oregon Capitol Grounds on June 6, 2014. At that time, over 95% of all World War II veterans were gone already.

It has been said by several Oregonians that we have an urgent situation. Time is running out. The window of opportunity is slowly closing for the state of Oregon to honor its Vietnam veterans while they are still with us. A Vietnam War memorial on the Oregon Capitol Grounds is needed sooner rather than later.

During the 2020 legislative session, it is anticipated that a Senate bill will be introduced which will establish a Vietnam War memorial on the Oregon Capitol Grounds. Currently, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office are reviewing a proposed design for such a memorial.

You can see the proposed design at www.vietnamwarmemorialfund.org.

It is estimated that the proposed Vietnam War memorial on the Oregon Capitol Grounds will cost 2.7 million dollars. A nonprofit corporation exists to raise these needed funds. The stated goal is to raise these funds from the private sector.

You can help. Call your state legislators and tell them you wish for them to pass the Vietnam War Memorial Senate Bill. You can also make a tax deductible donation to the cause.

Another year has passed and, with your help, we are one year closer to honoring our Vietnam veterans with a Vietnam War memorial on the Oregon Capitol Grounds.

Steve Bates has resided in Boring for 42 years and is a life member of the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America. He serves as chair of the Committee on Memorials & Remembrance and president of the Vietnam War Memorial Fund. He can be reached by email at vietnamwarmem@aol.com.

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