

OUR VIEW

Cliff Bentz for Congress

Greg Walden is retiring, creating a race for an open seat for Oregon's 2nd Congressional District. Cliff Bentz, a Republican, is the best person to fill it.

Bentz, 68, is an attorney and former state legislator — 10 years in the House and two years in the Senate. His opponent, Democrat Alex Spenser, 55, has worked many different jobs, including as a writer. There are sharp differences between them on a host of issues.

Spenser wants to require gun owners to be regularly tested on every gun they own for safety and proficiency. Bentz does not want new gun laws. He wants the ones in place to be enforced. That is not to say, though, that he would not support changes if laws are not working as they should.

Spenser supports expanding something like the Oregon Health Plan to every American. Bentz does not want a single-payer system. He wants people to have health care. He doesn't want the government to control it all.

On climate, Spenser backs the "Green New Deal." We agree the nation needs a bold climate action plan. The Green New Deal is not the one. The federal government should not guarantee everyone a job, as nice as that might sound. The federal government should not be taking total or partial control of energy, transportation and more. It puts too much faith and control in the hands of government planners. Bentz's concept is more circumspect, realistic and decentralized. He believes climate change is real. He wants innovation, sequestration and adaptation. He wants solutions that save people money and not more top-down fees.

Spenser's vow to work toward ending the divisiveness in Congress is appealing. But Bentz has real experience in the Oregon Legislature working across party lines. He never spent one day in the majority while in office. He managed to get things done. Two examples: Oregonians finally get an opportunity to pump some of their own gas and they can drive a little faster on rural roads because of Bentz. He also helped lead the compromise between Democrats and Republicans to deliver the \$5 billion state transportation package in 2017. That package does everything from helping transit to repairing and improving roads.

With Walden's retirement, Oregon's 2nd Congressional District loses a powerful, effective voice in Washington. Bentz's record of political accomplishment is a much better starting point than Spenser's.



Merkley for U.S. Senate

Oregon should not send a conspiracy stoker to represent us in the U.S. Senate. Reelect Sen. Jeff Merkley.

Merkley, a Democrat, is about as liberal as U.S. senators come. You could describe him to people from out of state as a younger Bernie Sanders and not be far off. You can't question his sincerity. His thoroughness. His commitment to serving Oregon and the nation.

He's worked to make it easier for small businesses to get federal contracts. He's worked to get funding that will enable Oregon to keep more water in rivers by improving irrigation. He's worked to keep federal health care benefits flowing to those who have been jailed and are awaiting trial. That's important, so county jails don't have to pick up the expense. And he's fighting

for a national approach to climate change, to make health care affordable and accessible, for affordable child care and much more.

We don't always see eye to eye with him, such as his support for the Green New Deal. We support climate action. Not that plan. Despite any differences we have with Merkley, he is the clear choice. It's not even close.

His opponent is Jo Rae Perkins, a Republican. There are fairly predictable Republican/Democratic differences between Perkins and Merkley on gun control, reproductive rights and much more. And Oregonians deserve a serious debate about the issues. But Perkins is a defender and promoter of QAnon and uses it to gather information. If you don't know,

QAnon is an amorphous internet-driven conspiracy theory. Its adventures into the absurd include President Trump in a clandestine struggle against a deep state led by Satan-loving pedophiles and North Korea's Kim Jong Un as a tool of the CIA. Guess who is Adolf Hitler's granddaughter, according to QAnon? German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Just to be clear: No, that is not true.

On the night of her primary election, Perkins posted a video in which she praised QAnon and said, "I stand with Q and the team." Her campaign staff has since taken it down. Perkins has said she regrets that.

If Perkins can't see QAnon for what it is, or is merely cultivating a few votes, she doesn't deserve your vote. Vote for Merkley.

Explaining the 'right to rest'



JOHN TURNER
OTHER VIEWS

Like most other cities in America, Pendleton is wrestling with how to manage its homeless population. The city does not plan to use its limited resources to provide robust services to the homeless. Nevertheless, they are fellow human beings and they have the same Constitutional rights the rest of us enjoy.

A couple of fairly recent Federal District Court cases have further defined the rights of the homeless and have issued guidance on what cities can and cannot do. In 2019's *Martin v. Boise*, the court held that there is a right to be homeless and to be able to rest. The government cannot criminalize homeless people for sleeping outdoors on what city property if there is no other access to shelter. More recently, in the July of 2020 case of *Blake v. City of Grants Pass*, the court said that the homeless could not be denied the life-sustaining activities of resting, sleeping and seeking shelter from the elements.

The city of Grants Pass had an anti-camping ordinance that also prohibited sleeping in a car for more than two hours. These laws applied to all public

spaces in Grants Pass at all times, including parks. There were no public shelters available in Grants Pass.

The recent "Right to Rest" ordinance passed by the city council tries to walk the line between providing legal access to some public properties for the purpose of sleeping (not camping), while denying resting in other public properties. For example, our parks have closed at 10 p.m. for many years. Therefore, permission will not be granted to routinely camp overnight in parks (the city manager has the authority to grant a waiver for special events).

People may not sleep in the right-of-way, including sidewalks, driveways and doorway entrances. Sleeping is permitted, including inside a tent, on other public property from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. the next day, but a temporary campsite may not be established. Sleepers must pack up their belongings, clean up and vacate their sleeping spot by 6 a.m.

Where are these other public properties? Well, the city owns parcels of land near the convention center, surrounding all public buildings, 6 vacant acres in the north Riverside area and near the airport. The Umatilla River banks are public property and there are a few small publicly owned parcels of land scattered throughout the city. The Community Development Department can provide more specific information about city-owned property.

Is this new ordinance perfect? Of

course not, but it does a couple of things.

The ordinance complies with federal law by affirming the right of the homeless to rest and provides guidance on when and where that might take place. It is a tool that police can use to enforce the law and it provides a reasonable right of appeal before legal action would take effect. Remember, none of this pertains to your private property and if you have a problem with homeless campers, please call the Pendleton Police Department so you can have them "trespassed."

There is room for greater thought, creativity and efforts to provide options for homeless citizens to live in every community. It is the responsibility of local government and law enforcement to provide the public with health and safety, and to protect the public from illegal intrusion. However, homelessness is not an issue for the criminal justice system to solve, nor should local governments be required to provide shelter for the homeless.

It will require an effort from the community as a whole to address not only where the homeless rest, but to address the services, from the public and private sectors, which will be provided to the homeless. The city continues to engage in partnerships and discussions about dealing with homelessness, and community partners are vital to this effort.

John Turner is the mayor of Pendleton.

YOUR VIEWS

Service to Morrow County is Matlack's focus

To Ken Matlack, upholding the Constitution of the United States of America and the Bill of Rights is a way of life. Ken has a history of upholding the Constitution and defending the rights of all people. Ken is not afraid to take a stand on difficult issues, even if it's not popular at the time. Ken always tries to do what is right by the people, and is an ethical man with integrity.

Sheriff Matlack expects the best out of his staff and leads the way by serving with sympathy, empathy and compassion. He promotes the concept of succession planning to make sure he always has a well-trained staff and will mentor, train and cultivate that growth. Sheriff Matlack has the knowledge, experience, integrity and a proven track record of

LETTERS DEADLINE

The East Oregonian does not run endorsements of more than 400 words. The East Oregonian will institute a deadline for letters to the editor, so we can be fair with all the letters we receive and allow for responses before Election Day, if necessary. We run the letters on a first-come, first-served basis. Please submit your endorsement letters to the editor by noon Friday, Oct. 23. You can email them to editor@eastoregonian.com, or mail them to East Oregonian, c/o Andrew Cutler, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, 97801. We will publish our last letters on Saturday, Oct. 31. Any letters received after the deadline will not run. Election Day is Nov. 3.

serving the citizens of Morrow County at a high level.

He has emplaced a command staff that has taken his lead and goes the extra mile to serve and protect the public. Sheriff Matlack continually raises the bar of excellence, to ensure his staff is providing the best service possible.

In this election race, Ken Matlack is

the qualified and proven candidate for sheriff. Sheriff Matlack has my full support and in November 2020, please join me in reelecting Kenneth W. Matlack for Morrow County sheriff.

John A. Bowles
Morrow County undersheriff/
emergency manager
Heppner

EDITORIALS

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

LETTERS

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published.

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