

Kristof:

Continued from Page A1



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Democrat Nick Kristof touts his journalism "toolbox" as providing him with the ability to deliver on campaign promises where other Democrats fail if he wins the race for Oregon governor.

homelessness, Kristof had a number of ideas of what the state needed to do to reverse it. He recited a rapid-fire list of concepts he said already worked at the local level or elsewhere: turning more motels to emergency shelters, tiny home villages, improving the permitting process for new housing and creating incentives for homeowners to rent out excess rooms and living spaces.

"Many of these things are not perfect," he said. "This probably sounds too glib. These are hard problems, but they're not impossible. Other states have chipped away at them using some of these strategies."

While Kristof would need to find a way to fund these initiatives, he said money wasn't the main factor in getting them done.

"In Oregon, the cost is not really the constraint," he said. "Especially in the Portland metro area, there's been a huge amount of money that has been allocated, so that is less of a constraint."

Should Kristof win the Democratic nomination and then the general election, he would be the first person in decades to hold the governorship without any previous experience in elected office at the local, state or federal level. Kristof compared himself favorably to Tom McCall, a former print and TV reporter who went on to win the governorship in the 1960s and shepherded lasting policies like public beaches and urban growth boundaries into law.

But McCall had ran unsuccessfully for a U.S. House seat and served as Oregon secretary of state for two years before he was elected governor. The last person to be elected governor without any elected experience was Charles A. Sprague, who won the governorship in 1938. Sprague, also a former journalist, served a full term in Salem but his reelection

campaign sputtered after he lost the Republican primary in 1942.

But the headlines that have dominated Kristof's campaign haven't been about his policies or profession. Instead, most attention has focused on his residency.

Secretary of State Shemia Fagan on Jan. 6 determined Kristof did not meet the Oregon Constitution's residency requirements to run for state office — namely, a candidate must have lived in the state for at least three years before the general election date. One of Fagan's key pieces of evidence is Kristof's voting history, which shows him voting from New York in 2020.

Kristof appealed Fagan's decision to the Oregon Supreme Court, arguing he has a long public history of calling Oregon his home state and has maintained a house in Yamhill.

In the interview, Kristof said he was confident the Supreme Court would rule in his favor and declined to say what he would do if the justices didn't. Kristof may not have lived his entire life in Oregon, but he said the state is "in my blood," and he's already committed to making it the place he's laid to rest.

"It's where my ashes will be scattered when I'm gone," he said, "on the family farm and maybe on the Pacific Crest Trail in Oregon."



Camp Riverbend Youth Transitional Facility/Contributed Photo, File

Youth with the Camp Riverbend Youth Transitional Facility near La Grande train in wildland firefighting techniques April, 2021. A state law now in effect automatically expunges juvenile arrest records of everyone who turns 18.

Records:

Continued from Page A1

arrest never happened without having to file paperwork with the juvenile department. However, they still will have records for any federal-level arrests, which operate on a different system.

That distinction is important for individuals in the system if they seek careers with exhaustive background checks, such as public service, military or security clearance investigations. They also may face challenges when filling out a rental application.

"I think it's great for kids to be able to do this because a lot of them grow up and forget the original records,"

said Digna Moreno, Umatilla County Juvenile Division supervisor. "And so I think it's great that we're able to do this for them. Some of them want to enlist in the service and sometimes their records may get in the way. So with it being automatic, it helps the process."

Sgt. Kyle Conner of the Bend Marines Corps recruiting office said he advises recruits to disclose everything. He tells them it's a lesson he had to learn personally when he joined.

"I had a thing and not being very familiar with the military at the time, I didn't think it'd pop up. And the recruiter found it," he said. "So that's one thing I tell everybody: even if you got it expunged, it definitely will still show up."

It's not uncommon that a

recruit will have a blemish or two on his record, Conner said. The Marines typically don't take people with felonies on their record, though, ultimately, it comes down to the individual, he said.

Conner puts it to young people in terms of green and red weights. The green represents all the good things a person has done in their life — community service, good grades, etc. — and the red stands in for problems like arrests.

"We just want the green weights to outweigh the red weights," he said.

Moreno said the new law will increase the amount of work for her department, but that it won't be a bother.

"It's a little bit more time consuming, but I think it's also great for the kids when they come into our system

when they see they have this opportunity for the record to be destroyed at the age of 18," Moreno said. "It gives them a huge carrot to work toward completing their conditions of supervision, being successful and staying out of legal trouble."

According to a supporting testimony to the bill, a comprehensive analysis conducted by the Oregon Juvenile Department Directors' Association showed the cost of this legislation will be \$1.35 million annually.

"If a kid recognizes the error of his ways and grows up out of it," Bowen said, "then by all means, have a clean slate when you become an adult."

— Reporting from Garrett Andrews with The Bulletin in Bend contributed to this article.

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