

Opinion

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Brown trying to distract voters

Editorial from The (Bend) Bulletin:

Democratic Gov. Kate Brown has a failed record of leadership on education, on foster care, government transparency, the state’s \$22 billion unfunded pension liability and more.

No wonder she is scheming to make this election about something else — anything else.

One of her latest ads makes the argument that Oregonians can’t trust Republican opponent Knute Buehler on abortion and women’s rights.

Let’s unpack that.
Buehler is pro-choice.

Buehler says the same thing about abortion that Bill Clinton did. He wants abortion to be safe, legal and rare. When did that become not pro-choice enough?

Buehler says Oregon will remain a pro-choice state if he is elected.

Buehler opposes Measure 106 on the November ballot, which would bar public funding of most abortions.

Buehler pushed for the new state law that allows more access to over-the-counter birth control. It was a big deal. Brown’s party delayed action on that bill for a year.

Buehler supported a 2015 bill that requires insurers to cover 12 months of contraception at one time.

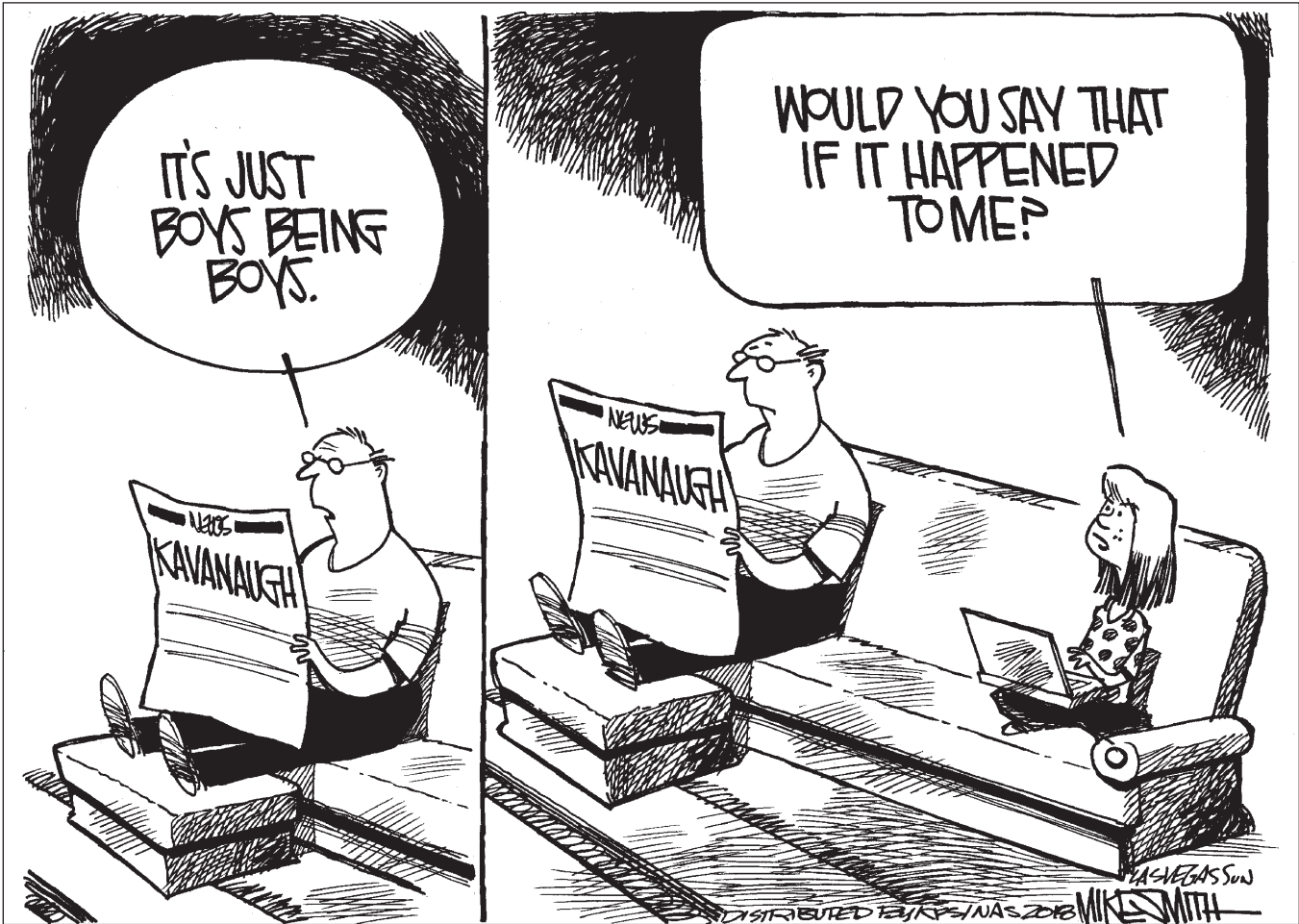
Buehler co-sponsored legislation in 2017 that expanded the power of pharmacists to prescribe contraceptives to cover hormonal patches and injectable contraceptives.

Yes, there is a clear place where Brown and Buehler differed. It was House Bill 3391 in 2017. It passed the Oregon House with no Republican votes. Brown signed it into law.

House Bill 3391 did a variety of things. It included a mandate that health insurers cover abortions with no out-of-pocket costs to the patient. It also included that state money be used to provide abortions for people who are not U.S. citizens and not covered by Medicaid.

Does voting against that mean Buehler somehow can’t be trusted? Some people and groups happily interpret his vote that way. Buehler said — referring to the bill — he opposes “extreme legislation that crosses the line from being pro-choice to pro-abortion.” He has also said he voted against it because it would add new services to a budget that couldn’t find room to improve education programs — dropout prevention and career training — as fully as voters had requested in Measure 98. Those are legitimate concerns about the bill.

Oregonians deserve better than Brown’s efforts to make Buehler into something he is not. She should be telling Oregonians why they should give her another chance after her failed record.



Your views

Resident responds to letter

This is in response to Mr. Rienks’ letter on Sept. 17. Sir, you poked the wrong bear when you wrote about an individual coming to the council meeting on Aug. 28 regarding a large scale marijuana grow. I am that individual and I was there for the entire meeting. Your recollection is totally biased and offensive.

At that meeting, you called for the city to hire someone competent in the city recorder position if the minutes aren’t available to the public the next day. Sir, you owe Ms. Smith a public apology. You have no idea what all is involved with her job. If this issue is so expeditious, then why were you and your wife the only ones there to complain about it?

Your analysis of Ms. Smith’s recent pay raise is beyond ridiculous. Do you really believe that the pay raise is just for the 24 meetings per year? Meetings that you think are just one hour? That raise includes the other 2,056 hours for the rest of the year with her job. That comes to less than \$5 per hour.

Sir, you state in your letter that Mr. Warner told you that “all we had to say was “garbage.” That is incorrect. What he said was that “most of what you had to say was garbage.”

Now as far as the city manager and Council failing to address citizen concerns, I had addressed the Council on Aug. 14. Since that time, Fred Warner and one of the city councilmen (Shiewe, I think) have been out to my house to see the marijuana grow. For me, that counts as the City taking my concerns seriously.

Also, the day after the last meeting, Aug. 29, I had a knock at my front door. There was Police Chief Dustin Newman. Warner had talked to him that morning about my concern about the marijuana grow. The chief had just come from visiting with the grower. He had inspected the facility, counted all the plants and checked for the proper licenses. Newman had to report that the operation was legal.

Shame on the voters of Oregon for legalizing pot. Since marijuana was legalized operations like this have been increasing. This is not the only marijuana operation within the city limits.

Mr. Rienks hopes to see greater attendance at the council meetings from the community at large. Maybe the marijuana availability in this town will be an issue people will respond to.

Roger LeMaster
Baker City

Yard signs cast doubt on Nichols’ GOP credentials

I have recently attended debates between Bill Harvey and Bruce Nichols. Mr. Nichols claims to be a Republican and verbally espouses conservative values. Yet many of the yards that have Bruce Nichols campaign signs posted, are also posting McLeod-Skinner campaign signs for her race for the U.S. House of Representatives.

Would those who consider themselves conservative really align themselves with an extremely liberal candidate for the U.S. House? Would those sign holders who support a liberal national candidate

really compromise their values to support a “conservative?”

Certainly, paired lawn signs supporting Bruce Nichols and Jamie McLeod-Skinner present fodder for thought. Ms. McLeod-Skinner supports the increased funding for federal agencies, is hardly a friend of the Second Amendment, and supports increased funding and oversight of national lands by the USFS and BLM. She is a staunch believer in man-caused global warming. It’s just socialism in another package. Check out her website, jamiefororegon.com.

The question then remains, who is the conservative and proven candidate to lead Baker County into a bright future; to protect our backyard known as the Wallowa-Whitman? The cozy relationship between the supporters of McLeod-Skinner, and Bruce Nichols, sure make it look like something just isn’t right.

Bill Harvey has proven his values and skills. He has my vote.

Harold Reed
Baker City

School bond measure to much of a financial burden

Re: Bond issue Measure 1-88. The community appreciates time spent by the committee in preparation of the proposed school bond issue. Education is an important tool in life.

Upon reading printed facts, though, I wonder why the District allowed update issues to go unresolved so long. Now the combined costs to do everything the District suggests leads to a frightening \$48 million. I daresay some students presently in school will, within the next 30 years, become homeowners in Baker City. If the bond issue passes, they will at that time be required to retire the remainder of the 48-million-dollar debt. Let’s not burden present and future property owners with a huge debt load.

Property tax statements will be in the mail soon. Upon receipt, homeowners have to consider each tax item. This includes 5-J. How many additional tax dollars can property owners afford? Many are barely meeting expenses now.

Phyllis Badgley
Baker City

Harvey has defended public road access to forest

In August of this year, I attended a planning meeting for citizens to object to the USFS’s plan to close roads. The plan also increases wilderness areas, wild and scenic areas and restricted travel areas, (where wildfires cannot be engaged), in the Wallowa-Whitman and two other contiguous national forests. Commissioner Bill Harvey and Commissioner Bruce Nichols were in attendance. Just prior to that meeting I read in the Baker City Herald that Mr. Nichols refused to join Commissioner Harvey in requesting an extension in the 60-day objection deadline set by the USFS, after their release of the 6,000-page forest plan that was 10 years in the development. The deadline is intentionally prohibitive to prevent many qualified objectors from responding. Work schedules, the volume of the plan language, the red tape involved in objection, restricts many citizens from responding.

Mr. Harvey has been involved for years

fighting to protect the average citizen’s right to reasonably access public lands. Mr. Nichols claims to be a champion in the same issue, yet refused to ask the USFS to level the playing field. Of the dozens of meetings over the last 10 years regarding the issue of forest access....I don’t believe I have ever seen Mr. Nichols in attendance at any such meeting. Bill Harvey is always there, defending your rights for reasonable access to public forest lands. Thanks to Bill Harvey’s enduring commitment to this issue, the Wallowa-Whitman is one of the few national forests remaining that still has reasonable road access.

Who is the champion standing up for your rights to access national lands? On November 6, you decide.

Tork Ballard
Baker City

Parents support school bond to help son, all students

We are writing in support of ballot Beasure 1-88 to improve the safety, capacity and accessibility of our school buildings. School safety is a topic that should be on everybody’s mind; whether it comes in the form of an outside threat or a natural disaster — we need to know that our children are safe in the buildings where they spend so much of their time. The proposed bond projects would provide state of the art security measures at every instructional building in the district. Additionally, new construction would be built to withstand disasters such as earthquakes and other unforeseeable events.

Overcrowding in our elementary and middle school buildings is an issue that impacts every student in attendance. Special education services are provided in closets or any small space that can be found. The enrollment levels are far beyond the capacity limits of the individual buildings (with the exception of the high school) and put our children in inadequate and sometimes unsafe conditions for learning.

There are numerous reasons to support ballot measure 1-88 — but for our family there is one reason that rises above them all. Augustus, our 2-year-old son, uses a wheelchair to navigate his world. Born with a condition which has no cure, he will face challenges every day of his life when it comes to mobility. Our current school buildings do not meet the needs of an individual with physical disabilities and we have struggled with the decision to leave this community that we love living in, for a different town with schools that can better meet his needs. When this bond measure was announced we became hopeful that this will be the solution that will allow our family to continue living in Baker City. As a special education teacher myself, I have watched many great families leave this town in search of better schools for their children who have different educational needs. It is time that we support a bond to improve our schools for all children.

It is with great hope and optimism that we submit this letter.

Levi and Karla Macy
Baker City

Letters to the editor

- We welcome letters on any issue of public interest. Customer complaints about specific businesses will not be printed.
- Letters are limited to 350 words; longer letters will be edited for length. Writers are limited to one letter every 15 days.
- The writer must sign the letter and include an address and phone number (for verification only). Letters that do not include this information cannot be published.
- Letters will be edited for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons.

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