

# Local & State

OREGON GUBERNATORIAL RACE

## Brown vs. Buehler meet again in a statewide race

■ Kate Brown defeated Knute Buehler in 2012 for Oregon secretary of state

By Gary A. Warner  
WesCom News Service

SALEM — Six years after their last electoral battle, Kate Brown and Knute Buehler are back on the ballot together. In 2012, it was the race for secretary of state, won by Brown. This time, the stakes are higher: Governor. Brown became the state's chief executive in 2015 when John Kitzhaber resigned in an influence peddling scandal involving his administration. Brown won an election in November 2016 to fill out the final two years of Kitzhaber's term. Now, she is running for her own four-year term.

Buehler recalibrated his political path in 2014, opting to run to represent Bend in House District 54.

Despite a Democratic voter registration edge, he won and was re-elected in 2016.

Brown and Buehler are locked in the most expensive governor's race in state history, with more than \$26 million raised as of Oct. 11. The money has been used for an avalanche of television commercials and digital ads. Outside groups have weighed in against each, adding to the noise level of the campaign.

WesCom News Service asked the candidates about two issues of importance in Oregon, and gave them the opportunity to discuss one or two issues in addition that they believe are important in the race. Here are their responses:

**Q:** Oregon is near the bottom in terms of high school graduation rates in the nation. What can you, as governor, do in terms of specific new steps to bring Oregon above the 50 percent mark among states by the end of the governor's next term in early 2023?

**• Brown:** Under my leadership, graduation rates have improved by 5 percent, but there's still more work to be done. As governor, I'll invest \$300 million in career and technical education to ensure students are excited to stay in school. I plan to expand high-quality preschool in the next two years, to an additional 10,000 low-income children, and 40,000 low-income children by 2025. I'm committed to reducing class size averages

### Kate Brown

- Party: Democrat
- Age: 58
- Residence: Salem
- Profession: Oregon governor
- Education: Bachelor of arts, environmental conservation, University of Colorado; law degree, Northwestern School of Law, Lewis and Clark College



### Knute Buehler

- Party: Republican
- Age: 54
- Residence: Bend
- Profession: State representative and orthopedic surgeon
- Education: Bachelor of science, microbiology, Oregon State University; master's degree, politics and economics, Oxford University; medical degree, The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine



and requiring a 180-day school year. Finally, I'll make Oregon home to the best teachers in the nation by ensuring a safe and secure retirement for our teachers.

**• Buehler:** As governor, I'll take Oregon schools from the bottom five to the top five in five years. My plan has several goals, but I'll focus on the three most important — restoring the lost school year and more classroom funding. By the time they graduate, students in Oregon have attended an equivalent of a full year less school than the national standard. This needs to change to a full 180-day school year. We also need to solve our classroom-funding crisis, which is the cause of runaway pension and benefit costs that drains more and more dollars away from kids and classroom learning. In addition, we need to fully fund career and technical education. My plan is ambitious, but achievable.

**Q:** The Public Employees Retirement System

is a major block to financial solutions to solve many of the state's pressing needs. How would you bring the problem under control and move toward a long-term solution?

**• Brown:** Addressing PERS is one of my top concerns, and under my leadership, Oregon passed a law providing matching funds to help local governments reduce their debts and ongoing costs. I will tackle PERS in three key ways. First, working to bring down the unfunded actuarial liability with recommendations of my high level task force. Secondly, we are increasing our return on investments by adding positions in the treasury department to more efficiently manage the state's investment portfolio. Finally, we need to maintain employee's investment in their own retirement and continue to pursue cost and risk sharing options for PERS members.

**• Buehler:** We need to fix our broken pension system and redirect resources to criti-

cal public programs like K-12 education. As governor, I will not sign any new spending until I have a PERS reform bill on my desk. Elements include: Honoring past commitments and protecting pension benefits that have already been earned.

Capping the salary amount used to calculate benefits to \$100,000 a year.

Requiring all state and local government employees to contribute toward their own retirement benefits.

Enrolling new employees and transitioning current employees to a 401(k)-type plan with a reasonable match.

**Q:** What other one or two problems affecting Central Oregon do you think are especially important and what new steps you would take to solve or reduce the problem over the course of your term?

**• Brown:** I think access to health care and affordable housing are two critical problems affecting Central Oregon. To address health care access, I'll work to ensure 99 percent of adults and 100 percent of kids have access to health insurance, and that there is greater access to mental health and addiction treatment. On housing and homelessness, I'm committed to investing in permanent supportive housing for the homeless, accelerating growth in housing supply, and stabilizing existing affordable housing while generating more affordable housing options for communities across our state.

**• Buehler:** As governor, I'll close the achievement and opportunity gaps between rural and urban, and be a governor for all of Oregon. These gaps include access to higher education. I have been a long-time supporter of Oregon State University-Cascades and bringing a four-year university to Central Oregon. In the Legislature, I worked to get funding for the new campus and expansion project. As governor, I will advocate to put OSU-Cascades on equal footing with the state's other standalone universities. OSU-Cascades has already had a tremendous, positive impact on the community and is key to Central Oregon's social and economic future.

## Five arrested in warrant sweep

In recognition of October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the Baker County Sheriff's Office on Wednesday joined law enforcement agencies across the nation in a Domestic Violence Warrant Sweep.

Sheriff Travis Ash, Undersheriff Jef VanArsdall, Sgt. Craig Rilee, Deputy Adam Robb and Deputy Rich Kirby attempted to serve three domestic violence related arrest warrants.

With the assistance of the Walla Walla County Sheriff's Office in Washington, two of the domestic violence warrants were served, a press release from the Sheriff's Office

stated. In addition to the domestic violence warrants, three people were arrested on non-domestic violence related warrants.

This is the first time the Baker County Sheriff's Office has joined the "sweep," but it will continue as an annual event, the press release stated.

Those arrested on charges of violating terms of their probation were:

- Jason Charles Taylor, 39.
- Robert Wiersch, 31, of Huntington.
- Robert Harkness, 52, of Huntington.
- Danielle Purkey, 38, of 2855 First St.
- Kristi DeJong, 45, of Haines.

## CONGRESS

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McLeod-Skinner took questions on a variety of issues including forest management, health care, poverty and bipartisanship.

In an opening statement she told attendees that her reputation from serving as an elected official in the past is that she is independent minded, fiscally responsible and committed to ethics.

When addressing the country's healthcare costs, McLeod-Skinner says that everyone should have access to health care.

"I have yet to hear someone who identifies as liberal or identifies as a conservative who doesn't want their loved ones to have access to health care," McLeod-Skinner said.

McLeod-Skinner said that fixing the political system starts with building relationships, and that she would make it her goal to connect with people across the political spectrum. She also said that she supports getting big money out of politics and possible term limits for Congress.

When addressing poverty in the Second District, where about 50 percent of people are below the poverty line, McLeod-Skinner suggested that investments in infrastructure, rural broadband and renewable energy would benefit the mostly rural district. She added that a program where students get higher education paid for in exchange for public service in rural communities could help address poverty and the limited number of skilled workers in the district.

All questions came from members of the audience but some had been submitted before the debate on index cards while others were asked on the spot. Suzanne Fouty, a Baker City resident of 16 years, moderated the town hall.

Throughout her campaign McLeod-Skinner has traveled more than 40,000 miles, visiting every county in the district, which is the 7th-largest in the country in acreage.

Walden has won 10 races in the district, receiving at least 61 percent of the vote in each election.

## FIRE

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"It was good to see we can get that kind of response," Morgan said. "All our stations are short-handed."

The Bar C Bar Ranch is north of Highway 7 and Phillips Reservoir.

The fire was started in a pasture north of Deems Loop Road.

The fire's spread is tangible evidence that despite cooler temperatures and widespread

rain earlier this month, vegetation remains dry, Meyer said.

"Just because it's getting cold at night doesn't mean it's not still really dry out there," he said.

There hasn't been any measurable rain in Baker County since a storm on Oct. 9.

Since then temperatures have been above average each of the past six days, with the high reaching 70 or above on five of those days at the Baker City Airport.

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Paid for by the YES FOR KIDS Committee, Debbie Penning, Treasurer

**Baker County Republicans**

**Recommends Voting For:**

- ✓ Greg Walden for US Representative, CD2
- ✓ Knute Buehler for Governor
- ✓ Vote YES on 1-84, Baker County Measure, the Second Amendment Preservation Ordinance

**Vote YES on State Measures:**

- ✓ 103 Vote YES to ban a sales tax on groceries
- ✓ 104 Vote YES to require a 3/5 majority before and tax or fee increase
- ✓ 105 Vote YES to repeal state sanctuary status
- ✓ 106 Vote YES for nor more tax payer funded abortions

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