

Opinion

BAKER CITY
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Your views

I'll be voting for Harvey, who comes up with solutions

I normally don't get involved in political things but decided to go with my grandmother to the commissioner debate that the Livestock Association held on Thursday. I was surprised at how many people attended. What surprised me more was how Mr. Nichols approached the questions. Everything was all about himself and he used "I" a lot.

As an employee of a Baker City private business, I was even more disappointed that he blamed the staff regarding the financial audit being late. I would be the first to say, I don't understand government finances. Bill Harvey defended the staff of the County, says he is there to support what they are doing and they are very qualified to do the job. Bill is who I want as a leader. To Mr. Nichols I would say, "Don't throw your employees under the bus."

I have heard several times over the past few months the term "transparency" and how Mr. Nichols wants to bring this to the Commission if elected. He also said, on many occasions during the debate, that Bill Harvey does not give him information to make his decisions and even alluded to Bill keeping it from him on purpose. After hearing this, I was confused with Mr. Nichols' closing statement! He elaborated again on the financial audit and used the term \$6.5 million. Again, I don't understand audit and numbers. Then Mr. Nichols goes on to say to the reporter, sitting in the front row, "I have asked you to keep this to yourself for some time and now I am going to allow you to report what we have been discussing."

The look on Bill Harvey's face was total surprise and when he was asked if he knew anything about this, he said this was the first time he heard it. I guess I need to go "Google" what transparency means.

I will certainly be re-electing Bill Harvey and appreciate his ethical way of managing employees, issues and government business. Bill comes up with solutions, while Mr. Nichols comes up with complaints.

Andrea Culley
Baker City

Annable would be fine addition to Baker City Council

Having observed Carly Annable's skills in managing the Heritage Museum for a couple of years, I am pleased to see that she is running for a city council position. She is bright, full of energy and has a knack for working with others and getting things done. She has a passion for Baker City. She would be a fine addition to the council.

Bruce McMillan
Baker City

Passing school bond will benefit Baker's children

Thousands of public school districts across the country are researching school safety programs, passing bonds to implement a variety of school safety measures both high tech and low tech. Students, parents and grandparents want safe school environments. Extensive research has occurred the past 20 years to improve school safety. Research has found that good old one-on-one communication with students, getting to know students and identifying students with potential behavioral problems is the best way to prevent school violence.

Baker School Bond (Measure 1-88) will fund needed improvements to eliminate overcrowding in Baker schools. Friends and relatives from Western Oregon and Western Washington visit Eastern Oregon enjoying and commenting on the open spaces and uncrowded restaurants, roads and rural communities. Overcrowding increases stress, anxiety levels and the resulting behavioral issues (think road rage), reducing overcrowding will improve school safety and provide a healthy teaching-learning environment.

My voting registration address is Pendleton, Oregon, I can't vote for this measure. I have property in Baker County, I support the Baker School Bond even though it will raise my taxes. I support the Baker school bond because the money will improve the safety, teaching and learning environment for my grandchildren.

Please vote yes for Baker School Bond Measure 1-88.

Robert Hall
Pendleton

School bond isn't just about kids — it's about a better future for Baker

The slogan "Yes for Kids" misses the mark. In reality, passing a school bond is about more than just the kids — it is about the continued viability of Baker City. Voting yes on the school bond is to vote "Yes for Baker." The view that the school bond only benefits certain groups or that it would be burden-

ing our kids with future property taxes is shortsighted.

The continued and future economic viability of Baker depends on attracting businesses and young professionals to our City. When they are debating whether or not to live in Baker, they will inevitably tour our school facilities. Right now, our elementary and middle school buildings are an embarrassment, and significantly worse than facilities in our neighboring cities and states. After living in Idaho, it was difficult for us to move our business back to Baker and send our daughter to a portable at Brooklyn Elementary. I know many others are not willing to keep their children in such facilities long term.

The quality of our school buildings indirectly affects everyone. It will affect the quality of medical care in Baker. It will affect future employment opportunities in Baker. It will affect the quality of future teachers we attract to Baker. It will affect the entire economy of Baker.

One way or the other, these buildings will have to eventually be replaced. If we vote no on this school bond, then we are simply pushing the issue down the road for our children to solve. Construction costs will continue to increase and our children will be forced to pass an even greater school bond to replace the facilities that our generation voted to pass on to them. Voting no on the school bond is a vote that our children and grandchildren, rather than us, should pay for the facilities.

The school bond will benefit everyone and is essential for Baker's future. I encourage you to show your support for our City's future by voting "Yes for Baker" on Measure 1-88.

Jeremy Hindman
Baker City

Claim about Oregonians' tax burden doesn't add up

In an Oct. 19 letter dismissing the school bond measure, a couple wrote that "Oregon is already the third-highest taxed state in the nation." I ask what evidence they provide to justify this claim?

To be clear, Oregon does have a relatively high income tax rate. TurboTax.com reports that Oregon has the third-highest income-tax rate in the nation at around 9.9 percent if you make over \$125,000. However, other taxes should be considered when characterizing Oregon's tax burden relative to other states. For example, Oregon is one of only 5 states to not have any sales tax, nor does Oregon tax Social Security. There is property tax too. Depending on how you crunch your numbers you come out with different estimates of Oregon's overall tax burden.

USA today claims Oregonians pay the 11th-highest taxes in the nation. Wallethub.com puts Oregon at 28th-highest taxed state. Forbes.com puts Oregon at ninth-highest. The website smartassets.com, says Oregon is "moderately tax-friendly toward retirees." The numbers vary if you look around. The one thing that is clear, is that the claim "Oregon is already the third-highest taxed state in the nation" is false. It's important to have the facts straight, especially when making big decisions for the future of our kids.

Ethan Wolston
Baker City

Voters should take time to research before casting ballots

Voting on state measures which affect the Oregon Constitution is serious, and not to be done without due consideration. Yes, they are difficult to read, and to fully understand. If you cannot figure out exactly what a measure is about, or how it will truly affect Oregon law, take the time to read the opinions of those in favor, and those opposed.

These are individuals and organizations which have taken the time to clarify the issue and explain how the passage of a measure would really affect Oregon law. Importantly, these opinions often address the aspects of a measure that are NOT stated. I vote No on all five.

We can be grateful that we receive a voters' pamphlet. Many states have nothing as informative as Oregon's.

I see no reason to displace Governor Brown and will support her. I am not impressed with what opposing candidate Knute Buehler has sent to my mailbox. He has not taken the time to visit our half of the state. He runs online video ads (that are not cheap). I suspect that he has a well-moneyed campaign, backed by corporate and special interests — which usually have their own agenda for our state.

While experience is valuable for any public position, I do not support Harvey, who seems too comfortable. I am voting for Bruce Nichols, whom I have met. I am impressed with his experience, integrity and willingness to serve the greater community good, and for McLeod-Skinner.

Letters to the editor

- The Baker City Herald will not knowingly print false or misleading claims. However, we cannot verify the accuracy of all statements in letters to the editor.
- 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.

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Linda Bergeron
Halfway

Voters should beware of effects of school bond measure

Beware of school bond measure 1-88. If you vote yes:

Property owners will have a 30-year commitment for at least \$105 million (bond plus interest)

All property taxes will increase.

We will have at least two more vacant schools in the district.

We will not be able to afford another bond if enrollment really does grow in the future.

The school district will have a \$52 million blank check to spend for projects.

The interest payments and the majority of all contract amounts will leave the Baker economy.

If you vote No:

Our hard-earned dollars will stay in Baker.

The school district will have to make do with what they have.

The existing buildings will be maintained and occupied.

If enrollment does increase in the future we can afford a bond to handle the growth.

The Web Academy could handle an unlimited number of local students.

Did you know local enrollment is restricted?

Online education is the trend of the future; it should be embraced.

How does a shiny new building improve the education of our kids?

It's not about kids. It's about being responsible with our community assets.

I am pretty sure you can buy all of downtown Baker for \$48 million.

Vote wisely!

Mike Purvine
Baker City

Baker City's economy can't afford school bond measure

Measure 1-88, the school bond issue, is not about safety or security for our children, it is about money for somebody from you. \$48 million is about \$4,800 for every man, woman and child in Baker City and I don't think that includes interest, they never say. Proponents say it's about security. If there has ever been a security issue in Baker I haven't heard about it.

Proponents like to break this down to pennies per day. Consider this. I recently took a drive around the city and counted the empty businesses. In a short drive I counted 59 empty businesses. Even the Ford dealer is gone. If this issue passes almost everything you buy here will cost more. People are going elsewhere to purchase items because it costs less somewhere else.

If you rent here your rent will increase.

Where do you think Safeway, Albertsons and all the other businesses get the money for property tax? They get it from you. And oh yeah, property values will go down. Who wants to pay those kinds of taxes.

People came to Baker for low utilities, low crime rate, low property tax, housing prices and good water. Now the water tastes bad and costs triple, property tax doubled in 16 years, and the crime rate is increasing.

Vote No. Money isn't the answer. There is very little correlation between the quality of the building and the quality of the education.

Jerry Huddleston
Baker City

Harvey truly is concerned about what's best for Baker County

I have debated writing this letter for months but I feel I have to at this time.

I have been a Baker County resident all my life. I am fifth-generation. My mom and dad had a farm on the north end of Baker County. They ran sheep, raised hay and wheat, and my grandparents ran sheep in the Eagles as did my uncle. My great-grandfather built Love Reservoir so my roots run deep here.

I personally know Bill Harvey. We were married for 13 years and had two wonderful children which in turn gave us eight grandchildren together. Despite the differences we had in the past I am putting my full support

behind him for county commissioner.

Bill is not a part of the good old boy club that has been in this county for as long as I can remember. He is truly concerned for the county, not what's in it for him. He fights hard for what he knows to be right. I grew up in the mountains and have watched as roads close and the forest deteriorates. He is fighting hard to keep roads open and for us to have access to our forests.

One of the main concerns I have is if Bruce Nichols does get this position, who would he and Mark Bennett appoint to fill the empty commissioner spot. We the public would not have any say as to who fills that position.

Julie Miller
Baker City

Electoral college worked just as the founders intended

I'm responding to the letter of Mike Meyer which appeared in the Oct. 17 edition of the Herald.

In his letter, Mike seems to blame our "dysfunctional" electoral college for the way the last presidential election turned out. Actually, the electoral college functioned exactly as our founding fathers envisioned that it would. Making sure that the interests of the less populated portions of our nation are taken into account. That is also why we have two senators from each state regardless of their population.

If enough of our citizens are dissatisfied with portions of our Constitution, it can always be amended.

Sig Siefkes
Baker City

Passing school bond would show we value our kids' education

It is time to fix our broken schools. Our current buildings are outdated, undersized, and unsafe. The children of our community deserve better than they are getting now.

Continuing to pay to update the current Middle School and Brooklyn Elementary to meet class size and educational needs is not cost-effective. The plan for a new elementary school and co-locating the middle and high schools answers the basic safety problems and lack of space while selecting the most cost-effective option. I appreciate the work the Long-Range Facilities Planning Committee has done to make sure we are making the necessary fixes without spending frivolously.

These are not aspirational wishes from the 5J School District but are necessities to provide safety and space for the children of our community. I have benefited from the generosity of the Baker community and its educational system. Now we all have the option to show that we value children's education. I'm proud to support this bond. Join me in voting yes for Measure 1-88.

Nathan Defrees
Baker City

McLeod-Skinner the candidate I've been waiting for

I have waited for a candidate like Jamie McLeod-Skinner for 50 years. She is smart and compassionate. She cares about the issues I care about — including health care for all, social justice, education, global warming and water quality.

She will listen to all sides of arguments and then make balanced and ethical decisions. She believes that our democracy can endure only if we engage in respectful dialogue with all members of our diverse society. We can not do better than elect Jamie McLeod-Skinner to Congress on Nov. 6.

Pat Duffey
La Grande

McLeod-Skinner listens to voters in the Second District

I'm voting for Jamie McLeod-Skinner. She shows up. She's driven over 40,000 miles visiting the small towns in our expansive CD2 more than once. She talks to everyone! Yes... bankers, businessmen, healthcare providers, clergy, councilmen, ranchers, veterans, students, and folks like me. And she listens to what we say.

Walden is unavailable at his office, on the phone, or by mail. When I send him personal letters or emails, his response is a slick policy statement that doesn't acknowledge my question. He has even informed me that he does not respond to "mass emails" or petitions.

Mr. Walden receives millions of dollars from political action campaigns and pharmacy corporations outside of our voting district. Those corporations have his attention. Not us. Jamie's donations average \$100 from in-state contributors, like you and me.

Jamie has good ideas to create a better rural Oregon. Our district needs and deserves an informed, dedicated representative in Washington, D. C. Join me in voting for Jamie McLeod-Skinner Nov. 6.

Cathy Webb
La Grande

