

# Local & State

GOP LOST SEVERAL STATEWIDE RACES IN NOV. 6 ELECTION

## Oregon Republicans ponder future

By Gary A. Wamer  
WesCom News Service

Election night 2018 was pretty much a disaster for the Oregon Republican Party. Now, the GOP has to decide what direction to take heading toward the 2020 election.

“Republicans have to pick whether they want to continue to try to win statewide by moving to the center, or be ideologically pure and move further to the right,” said Jim Moore, a political science professor at Pacific University.

Republicans must choose between a policy of cooperation or confrontation.

For Rep. Bill Post, R-Keizer, the conservative radio talk show host-turned-lawmaker, the choice is simple.

“This move to the left, it’s not working so far,” Post said. “Why don’t we try the other way and see what happens. It’s can’t be worse. And really, whether you lose by 6 percent or 60 percent, you still lose.”

The debate was set off by the election last month that delivered a cascade of bad news for the state GOP.

After some political analysts said the race for governor was a “toss-up,” Gov. Kate Brown won a comfortable victory over Republican Knute Buehler, the House representative from Bend.

In the House, Democrats won 38 of 60 seats, matching their highest total ever. The previous times were 1974 — right after Watergate — and twice during the height of the Great Depression.

In the Senate, Democrats picked up a seat to give them an 18-12 margin, just enough to pass tax measures without Republican votes.

A quartet of initiatives backed by many Republicans were shot down by voters.

Brown, a Democrat, called the night’s results a “slam dunk.”

The stakes are even higher in 2020. The Legislature that emerges from the election two years from now will be

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in charge of reapportionment of legislative districts. That may include a possible new congressional district — Oregon’s sixth.

The GOP must find statewide candidates for the U.S. Senate seat now held by Democrat Jeff Merkley.

The attorney general and treasurer offices will also be on the ballot.

The lone statewide office held by a Republican, secretary of state, is also up for election in 2020. It’s held by Dennis Richardson, who has been diagnosed with brain cancer.

There are few Republicans with major statewide name recognition, among them Richardson, Buehler and U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, R-Hood River. Walden is the lone Republican among the state’s delegation to Washington, D.C.

Walden declined earlier calls for him to run for the U.S. Senate or governor, preferring to build up seniority over 20 years in the U.S. House.

Buehler could run for governor again in 2022 when Brown can’t seek re-election due to term limits. While another statewide race is possible in the meantime, Buehler runs the risk of becoming a three-time-loser having lost races for the secretary of state in 2012 and governor this year.

How to stay relevant in the Legislature and gain traction with voters is a source of debate within the party.

As the party’s standard-bearer, Buehler ran as a pro-

choice, pro-LGBTQ moderate Republican. He benefited from a primary vote split between conservatives Sam Carpenter and Greg Wooldrige that allowed him to move on to the general election by winning a plurality of the vote.

Buehler tried to build a coalition of centrist Republicans, non-affiliated voters and disaffected Democrats. It didn’t lead to victory. Buehler in his concession speech on election night tried to strike a conciliatory tone with Democrats.

“It’s time for Oregonians to unite and find common ground,” Buehler said. He suggested Democrats look at his campaign stances for ideas for the future.

“I hope my Democratic colleagues will look at that body of work, and please, steal shamelessly from us,” Buehler said. “They’re good ideas. We’re happy to help.”

With supermajorities in both chambers of the Legislature, Democrats won’t likely need Republican votes or ideas. That has many Republicans saying its time to be vocal in dissent.

State GOP chairman Bill Currier said that political dividing lines have less to do with Republicans becoming more conservative than Democrats becoming more liberal.

“The Republican Party in Oregon will remain a powerful and relentless voice for the principles established by our party grassroots,” Currier said. “As the governing Democratic party in Salem surges further to left, few voices of moderation remain on the issues critical to Oregon’s future prosperity, fiscal stability and even fundamental freedoms under threat that our citizens have assumed would always exist.”

Asked about the shallow pool of potential candidates for 2020 with statewide name recognition, Currier said it was too early to start lining up opponents for Democratic

incumbents.

During the governor’s campaign, Buehler sought to distance himself from President Donald Trump. He neither sought or received Trump’s endorsement. Currier said the state party backed the president.

“As we have already been doing, the Oregon GOP will continue to advocate strongly for the president’s policies through 2020,” Currier said.

Rep. Carl Wilson, R-Grants Pass, the House Minority Leader for the 2019 session has admitted Republicans are not even “speed bumps” in the Democratic-dominated House. He said the GOP strategy will be to “tell our story” in vocal opposition. At the Oregon Leadership Summit in Portland on Monday, Wilson took aim at Brown’s proposed \$2 billion “investment budget” as a tax grab.

“You just can’t feed the machine enough,” Wilson said of the Democrats.

Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend, said that while there will be plenty of times Republicans will oppose Democratic bills, they should try to find areas of common ground with Democrats when possible.

“Ronald Reagan said ‘The person who agrees with you 80 percent of the time is a friend and an ally, not a 20 percent traitor’ — I think that is good advice,” Knopp said.

Political tides come and go. In 1937, the House had a 38-22 Democratic majority. Ten years later, it had a record 58-2 bulge in favor of Republicans.

A return to anything remotely like those kinds of numbers for Republicans is unlikely in the foreseeable future. Whichever course they take — center or right — Republicans may end up with the same results, said Moore, the Pacific University professor.

“This election shows that more than ever, Oregon is a very Democratic state,” he said.

## OREGON BRIEFING

### Democrats plan to introduce bill requiring guns to be locked

PORTLAND (AP) — Democrats in the Oregon Legislature plan to introduce a bill in 2019 that would require gun owners to securely store their weapons using locks.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports that gun owners who fail to follow through could be fined as much as \$500, or \$2,000 if a child gets unauthorized access to the firearm, according to a summary of the proposal released by supporters. They did not include a copy of the actual legislation, which will be introduced by Rep. Barbara Smith Warner, a Portland Democrat and Sen. James Manning, a Democrat from Eugene.

The session begins in January.

The proposal also would make it easier for shooting victims to sue for damages if the gun owner failed to secure the weapon, report the loss or theft of the gun in a timely manner or supervise a child using the gun.

### Family of prison inmate who died from flu sues state for \$7.5 million

PORTLAND (AP) — The family of an Oregon woman who died from complications of the flu while in prison has sued the state, claiming she would likely be alive if prison officials had given her a flu shot.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports the family of 53-year-old Tina Ferri filed the \$7.5 million lawsuit Monday in Washington County Circuit Court.

Ferri died in mid-January during a flu outbreak at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Wilsonville.

The lawsuit says officials bought 519 flu shots for a prison population of 1,645 inmates.

Attorney Michael Fuller says the prison appeared to only use about 300 of the shots, which seemed to be mostly administered after symptoms started appearing.

State Department of Corrections spokeswoman Jennifer Black declined to comment on the lawsuit, citing the pending litigation.

## Airport rain gauge working again

By Jayson Jacoby  
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Baker City’s official weather records are once again, well, official.

A recurring problem with the rain gauge at the airport, where the city’s climate statistics are measured, has been fixed.

“Knock on wood,” said Tim Barker, the science and operations officer at the National Weather Service’s Boise office, which issues forecasts for Baker County and also maintains the automated weather instruments at the Baker City Airport.

Barker said a technician worked on the rain gauge on Dec. 3. It has recorded measurable precipitation on multiple days since then, coinciding with snowfalls.

“It looks pretty good so far,” Barker said this morning.

The gauge, which has a heated bucket to melt snow, has measured 0.17 of an inch of precipitation over the past two days.

During November, by contrast, the gauge never recorded more than a trace of precipitation, even though rain and snow fell on several days.

Barker said Weather Service technicians had inspected the gauge several times dating back to summer. They concluded that the problem wasn’t the gauge itself but rather the software that runs the weather station.

## HEART TO HEART

### Lighted cross a special gift of the season

To all this special season of the year, a special greeting of the season. A thank you to the person or persons lighting the cross on the hill. The morning and evening I can see it from my dining room windows and I see the lighted cross in all its beauty knowing Christ died on a cross for me and now lives so that we can also live.

I hope if you are lonely, feel forgotten or weighed down with problems and you see the lighted cross, it will bring you comfort and a new meaning to your life, as it has mine.

Gifts are beautiful, but the cross is a gift of life. Merry Christmas to you all.

Viola Howard  
Baker City

## LAWSUIT

Continued from Page 1A

Addison sued Baker City and Lohner in October 2015 in U.S. District Court at Pendleton claiming civil rights violations. Lohner, 54, retired from the position in May after 12 years as Baker City chief of police.

Addison claims the City and Lohner violated his constitutional right to free speech in retaliation for an editorial he wrote in 2008 while he was working as a reporter for The Record-Courier. Addison also claims that Baker City and Lohner interfered with his job opportunities, defamed him and deprived him of due process because of the editorial. Lohner claimed he was entitled to qualified immunity because his actions were tied to his role as police chief. He appealed a District Court ruling denying him qualified immunity.

A three-person Court of Appeals

panel, which heard the case in July, affirmed U.S. District Judge Michael H. Simon’s earlier ruling that Lohner was not protected in his role as a police officer “to retaliate against individuals for their protected speech.” The opinion was filed on Nov. 16.

Addison’s attorney, Clifford S. Davidson of Portland, filed the new motion just six days later, on Nov. 26.

The motion claims Lohner’s attorney, Robert E. Franz Jr. of Springfield, recklessly misrepresented to the Appeals Court panel that certain facts were undisputed in the trial court, when in fact they were disputed.

Davidson said monetary sanctions were called for “because Lohner and his counsel were reckless in their representations to this Court that certain facts were undisputed, and because doing so caused the expenditure of otherwise unnecessary resources of the Court and Addison.”

Davidson also maintains that Lohner’s “failure to include in his excerpts of record a single affidavit or exhibit” as required by court rule, further compounded the issue.

“Addison expended significant attorney and paralegal time preparing additional excerpts and setting forth in the Answering Brief a complete factual record,” the motion states. “Lohner’s omissions hampered and complicated the Court’s resolution of this matter and wasted (Addison’s) resources,” Davidson wrote.

In asking for sanctions, Davidson seeks “an amount reflecting (1) the additional reasonable attorney and paralegal time Addison’s counsel expended in response to the misrepresentations and omissions (in Lohner’s appeal), and (2) the attorney time incurred in preparing this motion.”

The amounts would be determined by the appellate commissioner, the motion states.

## ELTRYM THEATER

MOVIE TIMES DECEMBER 7-13

**CREED II** PG-13

Under the tutelage of Rocky Balboa, heavyweight contender Adonis Creed faces off against Viktor Drago, son of Ivan Drago.

**FRI & SAT:** (3:50) 6:50, 9:30  
**SUN:** (3:50) 6:50 **MON-THURS:** 6:50

**INSTANT FAMILY** PG-13

A couple find themselves in over their heads when they foster three children.

**FRI & SAT:** (4:00) 7:00, 9:35  
**SUN:** (4:00) 7:00 **MON-THURS:** 7:00

**RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET** PG

Ralph and Vanellope discover a wi-fi router in their arcade, leading them into a new adventure.

**FRI & SAT:** (4:10) 7:10, 9:40  
**SUN:** (4:10) 7:10 **MON-THURS:** 7:10

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