

EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

The Bulletin
AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

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New state climate rules will change how Oregonians live

The Legislature was likely to have been Gov. Kate Brown’s best friend. It was controlled by her fellow Democrats.

But it wasn’t on climate legislation. Republicans walked out to block what she and many of her fellow Democrats had in mind. Brown responded with an executive order. And next week, key climate rules for transportation and growth are expected to be adopted by the state.

They are powerful changes to how Oregonians live and get from place to place. Some of them build on trends that are already in state rules. Some of it is new. If you like the proposal or don’t, now may be your last chance to comment on them.

The proposal changes how cities over 10,000 can grow. They must plan for what are called climate friendly zones to accommodate at least 30% of their housing needs. What does that really mean? It means more dense development. More growing up than out.

You aren’t going to be yanked out of your car. But there is a big shift coming in prioritization away from passenger cars. Transportation will be required to be more oriented toward pedestrians, bikes and transit. It will be harder to find a place to park and easier to find a charger for an electric vehicle. Local streets will be narrow and slow. New city plans for transportation will have to have the goal of reducing car trips.

If you like to bike, the rules may make things better for you. The bicycle system will have to satisfy most travel needs under 3 miles. There are more requirements for bicycle parking. Will there be wide, protected bike lanes enabling bicyclists to get where they need to go without having to worry about getting whacked by a car and bike lanes that will be cleared of snow? The rules don’t seem to go that far.

Another important priority is to ensure growth or transportation plans are



Bulletin file
More bicycle parking, as opposed to car parking, as seen in this 2019 photo of downtown Bend could be more common in Oregon’s future.

done equitably. Plans have to be reviewed through an equity lens. The question is if the more intense development may spur gentrification, despite any equity review.

Will these proposed rules lead to a more climate friendly Oregon? It would seem so.

Will it make housing more affordable? That’s difficult to answer. Supporters would say yes in the long run because the rules are aimed at being climate friendly.

Will it make more housing of the kinds Oregonians want available? Homebuilders are concerned it will not create the housing mix people look for and will put more pressure on prices for single-family homes.

Will cities get enough financial support from the state to easily transition to all the new requirements? We will see.

There’s more information here, tinyurl.com/DLCDagendas, about the agenda for the meeting. And the state has tried to simplify the explanation of the rules here, tinyurl.com/Oregonclimatefriendly. More information about how to comment is here: tinyurl.com/DLCDcomment

Let’s not set a record for low election turnout

Election turnout is low for the May primary. In Deschutes County, as of Wednesday the county had received only about 14% of voter ballots.

Please vote. We go back again and again to the recent race for state representative for Redmond that was decided by only two votes.

Even if you are not a Democrat or Republican and can’t vote in those party primaries, there are some important decisions on the ballot. Residents in Redmond get to choose about funding for a future police building.

Judges in Oregon frequently do not face challengers. There is a contest between Darleen Ortega and Vance Day for the Oregon Court of Appeals. That’s an important court in Oregon, where cases as you might guess get appealed.

Workers deserve to get paid what they are owed. And Oregonians deserve fair-

ness in access to housing. The job in Oregon that enforces those state rules is up for election, the commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries.

If you are a Republican, you can make a difference in an important race for Deschutes County commissioner, between Tony DeBone and Scott Stuart.

The statewide primaries also matter. There are significant differences for Democrats between Kurt Schrader and Jamie McLeod-Skinner for the Oregon congressional district that includes Bend. The Republican primary for that seat is no less interesting. Kate Brown is leaving. That is why so many Democrats and Republicans have flocked to join the governor’s race. And there are more.

Fill out your ballot and mail it in or drop it off. In either case, you don’t need a stamp.

■ Editorials reflect the views of The Bulletin’s editorial board, Publisher Heidi Wright, Editor Gerry O’Brien and Editorial Page Editor Richard Coe. They are written by Richard Coe.

TIM OMBELL
Illustrated by Washington Post News Service & Syndicate



TANKING

My Nickel’s Worth

Support freedom of speech

Your letters in Saturday’s paper were interesting and a distraction to the real threats that should concern everyone. Giving abortion rights to the states is how the Constitution is written. Even Former Justice Ginsburg knew it was poorly written and open to debate though written by liberal justices at the time. It will not change anything in most states, but you wouldn’t know that by the vitriol against the Supreme Court. To threaten any judge and their families should be a wake-up call for those who believe in any form of democracy. What should be more frightening is how speech and censorship is in the press and social media platforms. Now the government is starting what is only done in dictatorships and totalitarian regimes, a Minister of Truth. That should send a chill to everyone. Now that is Orwell’s 1984 and should unify not separate all those who actually believe in the actual freedom of speech in the First Amendment. I can only imagine if the former president had proposed what the current president is actually doing.

— Bruce K. Evans, Bend

Vote yes on Redmond public safety bond

The Deschutes County Library Board has enough issues without me adding another one, so the least I can do is also offer a solution. It is a fact that our current Redmond library will be a pile of rubble by next year. This all-brick building has been in use since 1930 and fits in nicely with the former Redmond High School (now city hall) across the street.

Twenty-seven years ago we agreed to higher taxes in order to redo what was then Jesse Hill elementary into a library. The outside has not been changed. It doesn’t take an architect to see that the two-story, modern glass-clad structure that will replace it clashes with the older neighborhood we have enjoyed for years.

Environmentally it makes sense to preserve what has already been soundly built. The upcoming May 17 election gives us a chance to do just that...and not just for one building, but two!

Voting “yes” on the sorely needed Redmond public safety bond could make available the all brick police station that is next to the library. An enclosed corridor could connect the two. My uneducated guess is that the cost of converting the station would be less than just the cost of destroying Jesse Hill forever. And certainly less than the cost of a new building. The best part will be that two buildings, solely erected with public funding, can continue to serve the public that has already paid for them.

— William Groesz, Redmond

McLeod-Skinner for Congress

I am 33 years old and this election will be my first time voting.

I came to the United States from India at the age of 12, and after 20 years, received my American citizenship last year.

As I look forward to filling out my ballot this weekend, I am grateful for a few things. I’m grateful to live in a state that makes it so convenient to cast my vote. I’m grateful to live in a country with democracy and freedom. I’m grateful to be blessed with peace, security, and stability. I’m grateful to not watch broadcast television and be subjected to political advertisements.

Having said all that, I’m also aware of the times we live in and the way things are going. With every election, and with every action, we have a choice. We have a choice to create the world we want to see. We have a choice to choose love over fear.

Like me, many of you may have received mailers from Kurt Schrader. The last few specifically seem to play on fear by suggesting that he is the only candidate who can win the general election. I hope you allow yourself to make the decision based on who you think would be best suited to be our next representative in Congress. I believe Jamie McLeod-Skinner truly cares about representing us and creating positive change, and not simply remaining in power. Please vote with your heart this election.

— Kavi Chokshi, Bend

Letters policy

We welcome your letters. Letters should be limited to one issue, contain no more than 250 words and include the writer’s phone number and address for verification. We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject poetry, personal attacks, form letters, letters submitted elsewhere and those appropriate for other sections of The Bulletin. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every

30 days.

Guest columns

Your submissions should be between 550 and 650 words and must include the writer’s phone number and address for verification. We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject those submitted elsewhere. Locally submitted columns alternate with national columnists and commentaries. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

How to submit

Please address your submission to either My Nickel’s Worth or Guest Column and mail, fax or email it to The Bulletin. Email submissions are preferred.

Email: letters@bendbulletin.com

Write: My Nickel’s Worth/Guest Column

P.O. Box 6020
Bend, OR 97708

Fax: 541-385-5804

The left is counting on an abortion backlash that may never come

BY MEGAN MCARDLE

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Democrats have long assumed that if Republicans ever managed to overturn Roe v. Wade, they would come to regret it. This was not an unwarranted assumption. Poll after poll shows that strong majorities of Americans think abortion should be legal in at least some circumstances and want Roe v. Wade to be left intact.

“By removing the issue from the policy arena,” wrote legal analyst Benjamin Wittes in 2005, “the Supreme Court has prevented abortion-rights supporters from winning a debate in which public opinion favors them.” The dominant metaphor cast Republicans in this scenario as “the dog that caught the car” — at last in possession of the object of their desire, with nothing but grief to come of it.

Yet here we are, and things don’t actually look so bad for Republicans. A draft Supreme Court opinion overturning Roe leaked last week, but a poll taken by CNN after the news

broke showed the GOP running seven points ahead of Democrats on the generic ballot, which measures which party voters want to control Congress.

Perhaps voters simply aren’t paying attention, or haven’t had time to grapple with the implications? Well, perhaps — but what about Texas?

Last year, Texas effectively outlawed abortion after six weeks of pregnancy. Now, Gov. Greg Abbott, R, who signed the restrictive bill into law, is running well ahead of Democratic challenger Beto O’Rourke. It’s hard to argue that Texas voters are unaware; the law has been hotly debated and has seriously impacted abortion access. But so far, it just doesn’t seem to be moving many votes.

At first blush, this seems positively astonishing, given how central abortion has become to U.S. party politics. Yet it is actually pretty easy to explain in terms of three factors: polarization, power and place.

Polarization on this issue is obvious: An ardent core of activists on

both sides has divided the parties cleanly on abortion and turned it into a litmus test for politicians. Republicans propose bans with minimal exceptions, while Democrats, even in red and purple states, struggle to name a single restriction they would support.

Because of this, the activists can’t affect elections much: They are already voting exclusively and regularly for one party or the other. The best the parties can try to do is to turn out a few more of their activists than the other side manages. The big hope has always been to move the less-polarized middle, but it’s starting to look like this issue just doesn’t have that power.

Power is another name for what political scientists call “voter intensity,” which explains why many issues that poll well, such as stricter handgun control, never seem to go anywhere. While a lot of people care a little about gun control, in most cases, it’s not their No. 1 issue, or even No. 10. Gun owners, by contrast, often become highly focused

single-issue voters. Politicians, understandably, are more responsive to those who actually vote on the issue.

That’s not the case with abortion, where there is a lot of intensity on both sides. But if anything there is more on the pro-life side, so intensity doesn’t help Democrats here, either. And the middle just doesn’t seem to be getting any more intense, even with Roe in the balance. Possibly because they understand the effect of place: For vast numbers of them, while they may hate what other states are doing, their local abortion law will probably be something they can accept.

If Roe falls, abortion will most likely be thrown back to the states, since the politics of the filibuster make a national ban unlikely. In Kentucky, where 57% of voters want abortion to be illegal in all or most cases, that probably means a pretty strict ban. In Massachusetts, where 74% think it should be legal all or most of the time, abortion access will likely be unfettered.

Moreover, the states that are

strongly pro-life also tend to be the states where abortion is already relatively uncommon. So a ban in pro-life Kentucky will prove much less disruptive than it would in pro-choice New York, where almost five times as many abortions are performed per 1,000 reproductive-age women.

That doesn’t mean there won’t be controversy. In states where the electorate is close to evenly split, asymmetric intensity could produce extreme laws that breed a backlash even from lukewarm voters. For that matter, even in deep-red states, there are undoubtedly limits to how many restrictions the electorate will support, and Republicans seem intent on testing them.

But it does explain why the current reaction is so much more muted than it seems like it ought to be. As long as Roe holds on, abortion will remain at the center of electoral politics. But should Roe fall, polarization, power and place may push it just as forcefully to the side of the stage.

■ Megan McArdle is a columnist for The Washington Post.