

## EDITORIALS &amp; OPINIONS

The Bulletin  
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## Home energy score needs equity and affordability

The city of Bend's affordable housing committee came out Wednesday night against the home energy score plan of the city of Bend's climate committee.

We probably shouldn't make too big a deal out of it. The Bend City Council makes the final decision. The climate committee has not briefed the affordable housing committee. And there was no actual vote by the affordable housing committee. There was a discussion and a consensus emerged about concerns on affordability and equity. Perhaps, the bigger worry would be if the city's affordable housing committee wasn't bringing up those concerns.

The plan is for Bend to have a mandatory home energy score program. It's like a miles per gallon rating for a home. It shows consumers how expensive it might be to do things like heat and cool a home. Before a home is listed, it would have to have a score and the score included in the listing. The city has said the cost might run \$150 to \$300. A private business would provide the service and the city would issue fines of up to \$750 for noncompliance. That could increase if the property stays out of compliance. The idea is the score would give home buyers information about the true cost of owning a home and give home sellers an incentive to make improvements in existing homes.

What happens if the price for a score shoots up because the program is mandatory?

What plans are there for the city to help low-income sellers come up with the money to pay for a score?



Dean Guernsey/Bulletin file  
Gavin Ames, left, and Travis Trondle with Sunlight Solar Energy Inc. work on solar panels on a home in Bend in 2021.

Higher-income homeowners are going to be more readily able to make improvements in homes to take advantage of the information. Is that an equitable outcome?

Those are some of the general areas of concern Cindy King, the chair of the city's affordable housing committee, brought up Wednesday night.

They are concerns that need to be fully addressed before the city approves any program. You can see more about the city's plan, including the draft code, here: [tinyurl.com/BendHES](http://tinyurl.com/BendHES). It does not spell out complete answers to the issues raised by King.

You can tell Bend City Councilors what you think at [council@bendoregon.gov](mailto:council@bendoregon.gov).

## Judicial retirements can't be separated from politics

Judges on the Oregon Supreme Court are elected officials. But with the retirement of Supreme Court Chief Justice Martha L. Walters in December voters won't get to choose her immediate replacement.

Walters is retiring two years into her six-year term. Gov. Kate Brown gets to pick her successor. That allows her successor to run as an incumbent. Oregon Supreme Court Justice Thomas Balmer will also retire at the end of the year. Brown gets to pick his successor. That allows his successor to run as an incumbent.

Notice a pattern? The same pattern often repeats in Oregon. Judges retire before the end of their term. The governor gets to appoint.

Is the timing of the retirements a political act? Would that matter?

We are not out to disparage the decisions of Walters or Balmer or their service to the state. Judges in Oregon are required to retire after they turn 75. Both of them are over 70. Walters has said through a spokesperson that she decided to step down now because she had already stayed longer than she had planned. Balmer has

said he has other things he wants to do.

But think about the timing of their announcements and the race for governor. Oregon may have a Republican governor, Democratic governor or even maybe an independent governor. The person Brown appoints would likely be different than the person Republican Christine Drazen would appoint, if she wins.

The decisions of Walters and Balmer may have had nothing to do with politics. They still cannot be separated from politics.

We don't have a solution. Delaware tried a constitutional provision that requires appointments to the state's major courts to reflect a political balance. But what happens if a person who is not affiliated with a party seeks a position? And Delaware doesn't elect judges like Oregon. They are all appointed.

We rely on judges to make decisions on the bench based on the law and not politics. If they are seen as making retirement decisions based on politics, it is not going to be good for the public's view of the justice system.



## My Nickel's Worth

## McLeod-Skinner for Congress

I met Jamie McLeod-Skinner recently, and that in-person meeting confirmed my decision to vote for her for Congress in District 5. She has been consistent and upfront about her support for families, including women's rights, affordable health care and common sense gun regulations. I am alarmed at how Republicans are trying to deny the right to a safe and legal abortion — even in cases of rape, incest and conditions that threaten the life of the mother. Jamie supports women's rights, while her opponent cheered the reversal of Roe v. Wade.

She's a hard worker who has the support of the Oregon Nurses Association and Planned Parenthood, among many others. I have done my homework and I believe that as a congresswoman, Jamie will work hard to protect the safety of our families and our communities.

— Gretchen Williver, Bend

## Vote no on Measure 114

Measure 114 will do nothing to reduce mass shootings or gun violence. It will make our tax dollars spent to defend an unconstitutional bill in court. Don't be fooled by the feel-good claims on this bill. Read it and it will make felons out of honest people, stress the police department's who have no programs that this bill requires. It will also affect the poor and minorities who will not be able to afford the fees levied. A permit could be in limbo for years, as there is no limit on waiting period to obtain a weapon. Sensible background checks to include juvenile records that were expunged, and raising the age to buy a semiautomatic to 21 or 25 would actually have an impact and withstand constitutional scrutiny.

— Bruce Evans, Bend

## Naiveté of The Bulletin's endorsement of Betsy Johnson

All eligible citizens should vote but should be aware of the political realities in this election. Phil Knight and other rich Republicans want a Republican governor, that's why they helped finance Betsy Johnson's campaign. They know that she will siphon votes from other candidates and are betting Johnson will flip more Democrats giving the Republican a boost. This spoiler

strategy has been obvious for months and appears to be working. Now in the final days of campaigning Knight has abandoned any pretense of backing the "independent" Johnson and shifted his substantial financial support to the Republican.

The bottom line is that according to recent polls Johnson has no real chance of winning. Even if you buy The Bulletin editorial board's arguments, a vote for Johnson is futile. Democrats and Independents who vote for Johnson are in effect voting for the Republican.

Oregonians run the real risk of having a far-right MAGA Republican as governor. The only way to keep that from happening is to vote for the Democratic candidate, Tina Kotek.

— Don Miller, Bend

## Ed Fitch is the best choice for mayor of Redmond

Ed is better prepared to take over the reins of the city than his opponents because he has the most relevant experience, a clear vision for Redmond's future and a rock solid commitment to an inclusive process for making policy decisions.

Ed's experience includes 40-plus years working in city government. He's been a successful attorney, a past city attorney, past mayor, chair of the Redmond Development Commission, has served on many public commissions and committees, has been involved in local civic and business organizations and currently serves on the Redmond City Council.

Ed's vision for Redmond and the council center around a transparent city council that actively involves and represents the public, a city budget that continues to be fiscally sound and anticipates and addresses growth, comprehensive plans to better manage traffic and enhance the livability of our neighborhoods, collaboration with other local governments and civic groups to develop long term solutions to homelessness issues, a heavy focus on safety in our public spaces and in our schools, and finally, a real commitment to diversity and inclusion — not just words; actions.

Ed's opponents both lack his experience and vision! Jay has been a solid council member but lacks vision. Ben has no experience governing; he would be a mayor in on-the-job training.

Vote for Ed Fitch — he'll hit the ground running and lead the way to a more open and welcoming Redmond.

— Bill Braly, Redmond

## 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](mailto:letters@bendbulletin.com)  
Write: My Nickel's Worth/Guest Column  
PO. Box 6020  
Bend, OR 97708  
Fax: 541-385-5804

■ 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.

## Elect Melanie Kebler as Bend's next mayor to solve problems

BY MELANIE KEBLER

Who we elect as our next mayor matters.

Our secret is out: Bend is an amazing place to live. People from all over have moved to Bend in record numbers. New neighbors and new shops fill our streets. There's a lot to celebrate. There are also real challenges. As growth accelerates, we have a critical moment — right now — to decide how to preserve the city that we love, and plan for the city we will become. I'm running for mayor for us to own what comes next.

I grew up here. Bend was a lot smaller back then, but we had the same spirit we have today. After I graduated Bend High, I went to work protecting my community as a prosecutor and a victims' rights attorney. My love for Bend drew me back here to start my family. Then, in 2020, it led

me to run for City Council. I was tired of watching our local leaders punt the ball on housing and homelessness. The voters agreed, and I'm proud to say I've been able to get real results on these issues as your councilor. But there's more work to be done.

I don't want to just talk about homelessness — I want to solve it. Within six months of my election, the city established a permanent emergency shelter to keep people out of the elements. In my first year, the council worked across partisan lines, in collaboration with our county commissioners, to come up with a Coordinated Homelessness Response Office. This will be a game-changer that provides a true strategic plan to solve the crisis. We also need clear rules about sheltering on our public streets, so right now we are creating detailed regulations of public rights

## GUEST COLUMN



Kebler

As mayor, I'll continue to support creative, collaborative solutions on homelessness that we need to lift people out of the trauma of life on the streets.

The lack of housing supply and subsidized affordable housing is pushing too many people out of our city. I led the effort to make code changes to allow for more housing,

get rid of red tape, and allow the new housing types we desperately need. I pushed for the city to review and streamline our permitting process so we get homes built more quickly. And this council worked with the Legislature to bring in new land on the east side on Bend's terms, with plans for thousands of new homes, including affordable homes for educators. As mayor, I will continue to advocate for smart growth solutions that provide the homes we need, invest in safer and connected transportation options, and protect our environment.

My priorities are reflected in those who support me. My campaign volunteers and donors come from every part of our community. A half dozen labor unions, the Oregon League of Conservation Voters and Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund have

endorsed my candidacy. So have dozens of elected officials and community leaders, such as state Rep. Jason Kropf, Deschutes County Commissioner Phil Chang, Bend Mayor Gena Goodman-Campbell and former Redmond Mayor Alan Unger. I'm humbled to have such incredible support.

The next four years will decide whether those who work in Bend can afford to live here, whether the rise in homelessness is reversed or made permanent and whether city sprawl swallows our forests and deserts forever. We need serious leadership, and I've shown I'm serious about getting positive results for our community. I'm ready to lead Bend as our next mayor, and I'd be honored to have your vote. Let's own our city's future.

■ Melanie Kebler is a current Bend city councilor and candidate for mayor of Bend.