

# Hard to stay on top of GOP's shifting sands

Even when U.S. Rep. Greg Walden is in Eastern Oregon, he is never far from the turmoil of the Republican Party.

He is the chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee — making him about as “establishment” as you can be. Walden’s job is to get Republicans elected and, once there, make them the most powerful force in Congress.

That has never been an easy job. Ego, assertiveness and ambition abound. But it has been a tougher job than usual in the last decade as Tea Party challengers have gathered influence, driving wedges through the party and breaking the Republican caucus into smaller factions. They drove a Speaker of the House to find a new line of work.

But Walden’s job is about to become even tougher.

Donald Trump is the presumptive Republican nominee — knocking off more than a dozen challengers on the way — and all along he has been insulting his competitors, high-profile Republicans and the party itself.

Yet he has won primaries, and Republicans have seen millions more ballots returned this year than in the last two primary campaigns. There are lots of reasons why, but no one can argue that the biggest reason is Donald Trump.

Walden told EO Media Group that he doesn’t know how a Trump candidacy

would affect the party. And that answer isn’t really a cop-out. No one would have thought the party would be where it is today, and it is near impossible to predict where it will be a year from now.

Walden is trying to stand on the shifting sands of the GOP. The Bushes don’t want any part of a Trump-led party. Powerful Speaker of the House Paul Ryan is wishy-washy so far. Republican voters are split on just about everything except their dislike of Hillary Clinton. They want to defeat her and deny her the presidency and all that comes with it.

Walden has some ideas on how to make Trump more palatable to the party, and a more electable candidate.

He said the vice presidential pick will be important, and threw out the name Joni Ernst as a VP he could get behind. Ernst is a popular junior senator from Iowa, a likable character and, importantly, a woman. Perhaps that could help the GOP win back some of the large percentage of women who do not have a high opinion of The Donald.

Whatever you think about Donald Trump, the man will not leave the Republican Party as he found it.

He will either reinvent it and restore it to the Oval Office, or he will take a hammer to the cracks already appearing in its membership, its legislators and the Grand Old Party.



## GUEST COMMENT

# Investing in CASA, children

By Lisa Romano and Tracey Blood  
To the Blue Mountain Eagle

Oregon’s child welfare agency, the Department of Human Services (DHS), has been in the news too often over the past few months for all the wrong reasons — closures of foster care programs, lawsuits alleging neglect and abuse of children, firing of upper management and failed federal reviews. These problems highlight the need for the state and citizens to understand the importance of CASA programs as an independent voice that provides oversight to vulnerable children in foster care.

CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocates. There are 23 CASA programs in 35 of 36 counties in Oregon, the vast majority of which are non-profit organizations. CASA volunteers are legal parties in dependency court cases, and they advocate solely in the best interest of children in foster care. They are committed to ensuring that each child in foster care finds a safe, permanent home as quickly and effectively as possible.

Volunteers are typically assigned

a child — or siblings in a family — whom they visit at least once a month. CASAs have statutory authority to access the child’s records, investigate all relevant information about the case, participate in court hearings and ensure that other legal parties (including DHS) are fulfilling their obligations to the child. For example, CASAs often attend meetings at school, go to doctor appointments, work closely with the child’s attorney and negotiate with the DHS caseworker. As a result, CASAs provide accountability and have a comprehensive and first-hand understanding of the child’s life.

According to DHS, more than 11,400 children were in foster care in 2015. More than 1,800 CASA volunteers helped 4,926 of these children. In Grant and Harney counties alone, more than 73 children were in foster care in 2015 with nine CASA volunteers serving the local program. While CASA is proud of our work, we are falling short of our goal to serve every child in need in Oregon.

CASA has been proven to be cost-effective: CASA leverages \$5 for each \$1 of state general funds. If

CASA programs were fully funded by the state, CASA volunteers could be assigned to every child in foster care to ensure they are as safe as possible, have the services they need and have their voices heard in court.

CASA regularly provides input to the government about child welfare issues and contributed to House Bill 4080, which established the Governor’s Child Foster Care Advisory Commission. As a vital resource to both children and their families, CASA hopes to be involved in future conversations about how to improve the dependency system, including having a seat on the new Child Foster Care Advisory Commission.

Investing in CASA means investing in and protecting Oregon’s children who are victims of neglect and abuse.

Anyone interested in information on volunteering locally can visit [www.grant-harneycasa.org](http://www.grant-harneycasa.org) or call 541-575-5574.

Lisa Romano is the Executive Director of the Oregon CASA Network. Tracey Blood is the Executive Director of Grant-Harney County CASA Inc.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Just say “yes” on Initiative 12-58

To the Editor:

I found it impossible not to respond to last week’s letter to the editor and ad posted in the paper opposing initiative 12-58. The main point for opposition was to save our children and community. I couldn’t agree more with both points, but maybe with a different point of view. We do need to save our children!

Our schools are under-funded to the point they always face budget cuts, staff layoffs, student programs being cut and forcing students to be responsible for participation fees. Some parents can’t afford to pay, so their child loses the opportunity to participate! That’s why some students lose interest in school!

Most graduates have plans to move away to hopefully find a job in a county that has something to offer in the job market. The best way to save the community is to bring in good paying sustainable jobs.

Local government officials should encourage free market ideas especially something as unique as the hemp and marijuana market. Opponents say Grant County can get money somewhere else for schools. Please tell us all which business or product you know of that the state will share tax revenue with any county that participates just by allowing private land owners to grow a legal agricultural crop or open a business they choose on their own land. This makes us eligible for a portion of millions of dollars in tax revenue, not to mention the boost our local economy desperately deserves from producers, processors and dispensaries!

Vote “yes” on 12-58. Then we can regulate marijuana sales, making it less likely children will get their hands on marijuana. We could actually hear some good news when Grant County receives their share of the tax revenue from the state, and when the unemployment rate drops from jobs created in the private

sector, our economy will actually grow! And if we apply a solution to a problem, our local government can have a teaching moment and figure out the best thing they can do is keep their nose out of the private land owners’ business!

Brad Olson  
Mt. Vernon

### The treasurer Grant County deserves: Julie Ellison

To the Editor:

I was involved with Jackson Oil, Inc., for 39 years. When I owned the oil business, I always considered my employees to be my greatest asset. When my father passed away in 1971 and my mother needed some help with the business, I discovered my first big asset in Bernie Carson. Thirteen years later, another great asset joined my business, and my life, by the name of Julie Ellison.

Julie served as my bookkeeper, office manager, confidante and friend until the day I retired, 26 years later. During that time, she did a fantastic job for me and all of our clientele across the county.

Among Julie’s various job functions, she worked tirelessly to: manage banking deposits and oversee our various lines of credit; properly manage accounts payable, thereby keeping our business credit standing in good order, which allowed us to consistently seek out new vendors; oversee and manage accounts receivable; promptly respond to any customer concerns or questions; and put the business and our customer’s satisfaction first — always.

I know Julie is more than capable of filling the role of Grant County treasurer. I have no doubt that she would — and will, if given the opportunity — do a fantastic job for our county. When you go to vote in this month’s primary election, please consider casting your vote for Julie. As a loyal, dedicated and honest citizen of Grant County, I know she would

greatly appreciate your support. And I, as another devoted resident of our great county, would appreciate you voting for her as well.

Greg Jackson  
John Day

### Hemp and Initiative 12-58

To the Editor:

Hemp is one of the oldest domesticated crops known to man. The Columbia History of the World states that the oldest relic of human industry is a scrap of hemp fabric dating back to approximately 8,000 B.C. So what exactly is hemp, and how is it different from marijuana that we consume medicinally and recreationally? Its seeds and flowers are used in health foods, organic body care and other nutraceuticals. Hemp fibers and stalks are used in clothing, construction materials, paper, biofuel, plastic composites and more.

Last year, the Hemp Industries Association estimated the total retail value of all hemp products sold in the U.S. at \$620 million. Sadly, all of the raw hemp materials were imported from other countries. Hemp is an attractive rotation crop for farmers. As it grows, hemp breathes in CO<sub>2</sub>, detoxifies the soil and prevents soil erosion. What’s left after harvest breaks down into the soil and provides valuable nutrients. Hemp requires much less water to grow!

FACTS: It takes four months to grow enough hemp to make the same amount of paper that it would take 4 to 10 acres of trees to grow over a 20-year cycle! In 1941 Henry Ford made a car out of hemp and other composites that were more resistant to blows from a sledge hammer than other steel cars were.

I’m still in awe we had to put this plant on a ballot hoping people will vote “yes” to grow a sustainable product on our own land!

Cindy Kidd  
Mt. Vernon

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## WHERE TO WRITE

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- **Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Website: [www.leg.state.or.us](http://www.leg.state.or.us) (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).
- **State Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario** (District: 60), Room H-475, State

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• **State Sen. Ted Ferrioli, R** — (District 30) Room S-223, State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-986-1950. Email: [sen.tedferrioli@state.or.us](mailto:sen.tedferrioli@state.or.us). Email: [TFER2@aol.com](mailto:TFER2@aol.com). Phone: 541-490-6528. Website: [www.leg.state.or.us/ferrioli](http://www.leg.state.or.us/ferrioli).

• **Oregon Legislative Information** — (For updates on bills, services, capitol or messages for legislators) — 800-332-2313.

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