

# Few excuses not to vote

Oregon has led the way in eliminating cumbersome and overly restrictive processes for getting citizens registered to vote. Versions of the state’s automatic voter registration system ought to be extended nationwide.

U.S. Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley and U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer have introduced legislation to compel states to move to vote by mail.

Oregon’s homegrown system of voting by mail deserves universal adoption. We should make it as convenient as possible for people to exercise a citizens’ right, not erect an obstacle course in their path that discourages all but the most engaged from participating.

Any election-related innovation brings meaningless chatter about the potential for introducing fraud into the process. Disenfranchised felons and noncitizens might, under this theory, slip a vote in for someone who they perceive as being more amenable to their concerns.

Such a worry is quaint to the point of nearly being amusing. Meanwhile, it remains to be seen whether Oregon’s most recent innovation — nearly universal voter registration — will make a difference in voter turnout or who gets elected. The choice by political parties to restrict who votes in partisan primary elections means that unaffiliated voters are left on the sidelines at that vital stage in the process. Only 18.7 percent of automatically registered voters turned in ballots in the Oregon May primary, well below the overall voter turnout of 53.7 percent, while 76 percent of automatically registered voters that month were unaffiliated, The Oregonian reported.

Keeping people from voting is a key way in which elections are rigged by the powerful and the political consultants who do their bidding. Voting in sufficient numbers is the main way that citizens have a sense of control over their destiny. In Oregon at least, there remain very few excuses not to vote.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Please vote no on recall To the Editor:

I think recalls should only be used when the person has committed a proven crime or gross negligence. Removing someone from office on vague accusations and rumors is highly irresponsible and just downright bad behavior. I have seen nothing presented that could be considered factual or criminal. I think this current recall is not so much about Boyd Britton as it is about a group of people wanting a change in the county government and not wanting to wait for the normal election cycle for that to happen. In my opinion, most of the accusations used against Boyd are just opinion and are nothing we should be going through a recall for. I have known Boyd for a long time, and I feel he always puts the interest of the county first. While he has not always voted as I would have liked, I see no reason to recall him from office. In fact, some of the things he has worked on and advocated for are seeing some very good success, and the county is doing better economically than we have for a long time — sustainable flows of wood products and jobs to be had in many different kinds of businesses are available. With the exception of the fires of last summer, times are good in the county, and Boyd along with many others had a big hand in making that happen.

Please join me and stand up for what is right and vote no on the recall.

**Dave Hannibal**  
Mount Vernon

nity and make positive contributions instead of tearing at the very fabric of what makes this country great. We all have a voice and a vote.

Perhaps some of the folks in Grant County should reevaluate their motives directed toward getting rid of things or people they don’t like and agree with. That’s the morally cheap and easy way.

Get rid of the commissioner. After all, he works his butt off for all of us and can’t please everybody, so let’s give the selfish few their way, because Boyd didn’t vote the way they wanted on some very tough issues.

Boyd Britton puts in long hours trying to live the dream. He also puts in countless hours doing his best to improve this county and the livelihood of its citizens. Unlike the petitioners, he doesn’t have a lot of spare time on his hands to make his case. As far as I’m concerned, he already has. Common sense decisions in the face of some pretty hostile input from disgruntled citizens.

How about we look at the man, the position and the whole record.

I’m voting no recall. Simple as that.

**Dan Maynard**  
John Day

and money without cause.

I urge Grant County’s citizens to vote no on this recall.

**Janine Goodwin**  
Prairie City

### ‘Vote no on the recall’

**To the Editor:**

We would like to voice our support for County Commissioner Boyd Britton and encourage a no vote on the recall. Boyd has proven to be a positive and productive part of the county court and our community as a whole for many years. This recall effort is being spearheaded by a vocal minority of Grant County residents who would like it to appear as though they are representing the majority, which is simply not true.

As an elected official, a county commissioner will never be able to please everyone all the time, but Boyd is a good man to have on the county court. His decisions and actions have the best community and county interests in mind. He is not divisive and he has tried and succeeded many times in bringing diverse and sometimes opposing interests together. He is fair in his business and supports many programs and projects in the county with generous donations of time, money and expertise.

Again, we support Boyd Britton as county commissioner. It’s time to move toward healing and reconciliation in Grant County and Eastern Oregon. Vote no on the recall.

**Mat and Jennifer Carter**  
Seneca

### Recall petitioners should provide facts To the Editor:

Recall elections take money out of taxpayers’ pockets, and that’s a big responsibility. A public petition to recall a duly elected official should be backed by clear, specific, detailed, publicly available facts. As the Eagle’s reporting shows, the people who filed the petition against County Commissioner Boyd Britton are not providing those facts.

It’s way past time for the people who filed the petition to explain exactly what they mean by each point of it. Vague charges that petitioners “can’t explain at this time” aren’t enough. If they can’t explain themselves a few days before ballots come out, when are they going to explain? There should be time for their evidence to be seen, examined and discussed in public before people vote. This is serious public business, yet the people who set it in motion offer nothing to back up their claims.

Full details for each of those charges should have been available to citizens and reporters the minute the petition started circulating, if not sooner. Where are those details? They should: Show us dates. Show us times. Show us votes by date. Show us how they can prove a majority of the county’s residents want another expensive investigation. Show the exact dates upon which the commissioner failed to recuse himself, with reference to the court minutes. Show us exactly what they mean by “misrepresentation.”

If the petitioners show no evidence, wise voters will assume they have none. Since they are already disrespecting the First Amendment by stonewalling the newspaper of record for Grant County and then filing a baseless complaint against a reporter for the state’s most respected newspaper for the crime of politely requesting facts, they are making a good case for the argument that they are wasting our time

### Britton gracious in disagreement To the Editor:

I am writing to support Boyd Britton as our county commissioner. I have worked with and around Boyd for years and have found him to be a die-hard advocate for the people of Grant County. Boyd works hard at his commissioner role, putting much needed heart and soul into the position. I will be the first to admit that I have not always agreed with Boyd, however have always found him to be gracious in disagreement. In spite of not always being in agreement with Boyd, I can say he has always been doing all he can to put his best foot forward. I appreciate and admire that about Mr. Britton. Let’s keep him around.

**Mike Billman**  
Canyon City

### ‘How about we look at the man, the position and the whole record’ To The Editor:

We all should try to find positive ways to deal with life’s problems. Giving employees encouragement coupled with constructive criticism rather than a good old butt chewing seems to get better results. Exchanging ideas with a spouse and working through differences rather than being hardheaded and stubborn seems to make life so much more fulfilling and enjoyable.

Asking ourselves how can we constructively build a better commu-

### WHERE TO WRITE

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- **Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Website: www.leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).

- **State Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario** (District: 60), Room H-475, State Capitol, 900 Court St. N.E., Salem OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1460. Email: rep.cliffbentz@state.or.us. Website: www.leg.state.or.us/bentz/home.htm.
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