

Platforms offer insight into key ag issues

The two major political parties have approved their 2016 platforms. While presidential candidates of both stripes have in the past freely diverged from specific points in their party's platform — and we would expect the same of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump — the documents provide a point for comparison of the policy priorities of each party.

Have a look. Each party promises to protect and advance the interests of farmers. The GOP says it will change capital gains and estate tax laws to ensure farms can stay in the family. Republicans favor ending direct payment programs in favor of risk-management programs, such as crop insurance.

Democrats promise unspecified programs to “protect and enhance family farms, a cherished way of life....” Democrats say they’ll do more to support young farmers and ranchers, and will promote “environmentally sustainable agricultural practices.” It favors a “focused” safety net for farmers.

Republicans say they want to rein in the Environmental Protection Agency. The platform demands “an end to the EPA’s participation in ‘sue and settle’ lawsuits, sweetheart litigation brought by environmental groups to expand the Agency’s regulatory activities against the wishes of Congress and the public.” It supports legislation giving the states a larger role in protecting the environment.

Democrats take note of EPA programs, particularly the Agricultural Worker Protection Standard, but say more needs to be done. The Democrats want to enlist farmers as “partners in promoting conservation and stewardship.” Republicans want regulators to shift from punitive enforcement to “a spirit

of cooperation” with producers, processors and the public.

The Democrats promise more and stronger regulation on just about every front. The GOP says it will reduce government regulation, and wants Congress to approve any regulation that will cost consumers more than \$100 million.

The Democrats oppose any attempt to “weaken” the Endangered Species Act. Republicans want to block attempts by the EPA and the Corps of Engineers to “expand jurisdiction over water, including water that is clearly not navigable.”

The Democrats’ platform wants to expand access to public lands, and at the same time “strengthen protections for natural and cultural resources.” It supports the creation of a trust fund to expand outdoor recreational opportunities. The Democrats want to create more jobs and billions of dollars in activity by doubling the size of the “outdoor economy.”

Republicans want Congress to explore transferring to ranchers, timbermen and miners some public land, arguing that private owners are the best stewards of the land because conservation serves their economic interests. It favors maximizing timber harvest on public land.

We think the GOP platform is better for farmers and ranchers. But we urge caution.

Platforms are gauzy documents long on ideology and short on specifics. They are points of departure for candidates up and down the ticket who are free to put their spin on policy.

By what mechanics will either party deliver its vision?

Details are important. Even ideas we agree with can turn sour if they are realized through objectionable means.

Take away THEIR GUNS TO SHOOT YOU.
Take away THEIR KNIVES TO CUT YOUR HEAD OFF,
Take away THEIR BOMB-MAKING MATERIALS TO BLOW YOU UP.
Take away THEIR ABILITY TO HIJACK PLANES.
Take away THEIR TRUCKS TO DRIVE OVER PEOPLE.
Take away THEIR ROCKS TO THROW AT YOU.

AFTER YOU TAKE AWAY EVERYTHING ...

“THEY’D STILL BE THINKING OF WAYS TO KILL YOU.”



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Out-of-context statements distort original intent

To the Editor:

Grant County citizens recently received an unsigned flier demanding a yes vote on the recall of County Commissioner Boyd Britton. If one takes the time to investigate each of the documents purported to substantiate their claims, you find many discrepancies and gross manipulation of the written word, extracting sections of writing from their context and thus allowing for the meaning to be misinterpreted.

There are no minutes listed that support the allegations. The minutes of the Sept. 18, 2014, meeting of the Public Access Advisory Board are prepared by one of the petitioners, which make it difficult, at best, to determine what actually happened and what could possibly be substantiated by those particular minutes.

In reference to the ORS citations, all are general in nature and do not address a specific concern. At the town hall meeting on Jan. 26, 2016, Mr. Britton was in attendance. Shortly after the meeting was to begin, one of the organizers announced there would be no meeting that night. How can any statement about intentions be inferred, let alone be judged?

Commissioner Britton did not support a demand to call for an investigation of the Canyon Creek Complex fire from a publicly elected group who did not comply with public meeting law when preparing their request on behalf of that group. They also did not offer a budget of the potential costs.

In short, the people who are demanding a recall have made unsubstantiated claims, backed them up with statute numbers and references to minutes that don’t apply. They have taken statements out of context to distort the original intent, with the hope you will believe their claims at face value. Do not fall for such tactics. Listen to the many community people who are standing up to this agenda. It is in the best interest of all the people of Grant County to vote no on the recall.

Beth E. Spell
John Day

‘Keep the mustache in office’

To the Editor:

I am writing in support of County Commissioner Boyd Britton in the recent recall effort against him.

Although I have only had a close relationship with Boyd for four or five years now, I can honestly say that recalling him as county commissioner would be a massive mistake. Even at the local level, it is truly unreasonable to expect to find a representative who is anywhere near perfect in their decision making or policy preference.

When making a decision as an undecided voter on an issue as contentious as this recall is, it is incredibly important to look beyond the

political issues at stake and instead turn one’s focus to the person of interest. Anyone who actually knows Boyd knows that his determination to serve this county and steer it in a positive and prosperous direction is unquestionable.

His love for the county and his desire to help the people in it are both very evident and unmatched by any others who have held his position. Boyd has always, and I believe will always, act in what he believes are the best interests of the people that his decisions impact the most.

He is focused on creating an environment right here in Grant County where future generations are able to succeed. I know this because I have experienced it firsthand. Mr. Britton could truly care less about petty politics. His real concern is improving the lives of his constituents and the economic situation of the county. I am very aware that once an individual has had their mind made up about a political issue it is very difficult to change it. For those of you whose decision has not been made on the recall, I ask you to look beyond the issues and look instead at the man in front of you.

When I do this, I find it very easy to vote no on the recall. Keep the mustache in office.

Tucker Billman
Prairie City

‘Why spend all of that money for a recall?’

To the Editor:

Vote no on the recall of County Commissioner Boyd Britton. I have known Boyd for a long time, both as a friend and a businessman. He has always been honest and forthright with me. I haven’t always agreed with the moves that the commissioners have done, but I believe they were done in the best interests of the majority of the citizens of Grant County.

When the petitioners are asked for their reasons to recall, they come up with some vague ones. I don’t know what their agenda is, but I believe it to be self-serving. Why spend all of that money for a recall? Wait for the next election. Then, if valid reasons are presented against Boyd, let the voters decide whether to re-elect him or vote someone else in.

Joe Clarke
Long Creek

Is Sheriff Palmer above the law?

To the Editor:

Is Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer above the law?

Palmer ordered the arrest of an innocent Grant County citizen for reporting a crime in progress, which was corroborated by an independent third party. The citizen was forced to spend the night in jail because of Palmer’s professional conduct.

The Grant County prosecutor refused to prosecute the arrest, which Palmer ordered. Was that because the professional conduct of “Constitutional Sheriff” Palmer violated

the constitutional rights of this innocent Grant County citizen? The citizen began legal proceedings against Grant County, which settled with the citizen for \$12,000. Was that because the professional conduct of “Constitutional Sheriff” Palmer violated the constitutional rights of this innocent Grant County citizen? Will the insurance policy premium for the liability insurance policy of the Grant County Sheriff’s Office increase because of Palmer’s professional conduct? If so, will the hard earned tax dollars of Grant County taxpayers have to pay for it?

Is Sheriff Palmer above the law?

Palmer created as his official policy as Grant County Sheriff to delete emails sent to him and received by him in his public official capacity as sheriff. OAR 166-005-0000 states that “unlawful destruction of any public record, regardless of medium or physical format, is a crime punishable under the provisions of ORS 162.305.” Did Palmer commit a crime by destroying emails sent to him and received by him in his public official capacity as sheriff? Is the Grant County prosecutor investigating Palmer for the possible crime of violating OAR 166-005-0000? If it is not, why not? Will the Grant County prosecutor investigate Palmer for the possible crime of violating OAR 166-005-0000? If it will not, is it because “Constitutional Sheriff” Palmer is above the law?

Brian McDonough
Bennington, New Hampshire

‘Vote for Todd McKinley’

To the Editor:

I have lived in Grant County for approximately 60 years, where my wife and I raised a family of four who still reside here with many grand- and great-grandkids. My employment was agriculture (cattle) and a couple of years of logging, which is the type of occupation my family is involved in.

For about 10 years, I worked as a certified sheriff deputy for Grant County, covering all duties concerning this job.

Due to half-truths and hyperbole regarding the coming election for sheriff, I believe my experience qualifies my opinion. I worked for three sheriffs from 1979 on. I believe that Tom Negus was the most qualified sheriff we ever had since he retired years ago.

Todd McKinley was raised on his parents’ ranch between Mt. Vernon and Dayville. His parents and uncle were morally the best. He inherited this quality from them. When the ranch sold, he went to logging for O’Rourke Logging Co. and was excellent there, too.

He had experience in the real world. I believe that Grant County needs a sheriff that possesses honesty, integrity and ability in its legal system, and so does America. My vote is for Todd McKinley for Grant County sheriff. Vote for intelligence. Vote for Todd McKinley.

John Aasness
John Day

WHERE TO WRITE

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