

# OEA's new president seeks conservative inclusion

By Paris Achen  
Capital Bureau

John Larson has been involved in working bipartisan relationships since he was born.

Both schoolteachers, his mother was a Republican, and his father was a Democrat.

As the freshly minted president of the Oregon Education Association, Larson hopes to bring his bipartisan background to make the state's largest labor union more effective in building support for public education.

"We tend to be viewed as liberal organization, but reality is more than one-third of

our members are conservatives," Larson said.

In his career as an English teacher and union representative in Eastern Oregon, Larson routinely worked across party lines. He worked in both the Morrow County School District and most recently, the Hermiston School District.

Larson, who is unaffiliated with any political party, plans to revive a plan for an OEA's Republican caucus, a group of conservative educators who want to advocate for public education.

"We are in the beginning stages but we firmly believe as Oregonians we need all to get on the same page," he

said. "There is not a single member who doesn't believe public education is important. We have differences on how it should be funded, but there isn't anyone who doesn't think we should have public education."

Such inclusion may seem at odds with an association that most closely aligns with Democratic candidates and ballot measures. Larson sees the shift as following the mission of the association to do what is best for the students in public education.

As the son of schoolteachers in Montana, Larson grew up in a culture that values union ideals. His first stint

as union representative came early in his career when he volunteered as a building representative for the Morrow County Education Association. He later served as president for the association for four years.

During his involvement in OEA, he has served as bargaining chair, president of the Hermiston Association of Teachers, the National Education Association Board director, NEA PAC captain, on resolution committees for NEA and OEA, and on the OEA Executive Committee.

He was elected as OEA president in April and started his four-year term July 10.



Capital Bureau/Paris Achen

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## RALLY

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M. Bates, who died during the demonstrations in Charlottesville.

Lindsay Rausch and Ashley Stevick, two local women who organized the John Day march, said they brought people together for the demonstration as an outlet as well as a show of solidarity.

"I was fed up with sitting and reading and thinking and stewing and not doing anything," Rausch said. "I think that right now, with everything that's happening, we all need to be doing something to let our voices be heard."

Rausch advocated for people to talk to their families and friends about issues like white supremacy.

"We've dealt with this issue here in Grant County," Rausch said. "It was just several years ago where we had a neo-Nazi group trying to purchase property and trying to establish headquarters here."

She said she thought the world took a clear stance on the issue in World War II.

"It feels like we've already dealt with this, and it keeps coming back," Rausch said.



Rosalinda Gonzalez, left, and Susan Church stand for a photo after a march against hate through downtown John Day Tuesday, Aug. 15.

"If your friends give you any crap about attending this event, you need new friends," Stevick said. "Everyone should be able to get behind this anti-Nazi, pro-love message, unless you are a white supremacist."

The march was nonpartisan and included people of all ages and all walks of life.

"I came out mainly to show some solidarity in the effort against hate groups in America," Dayville resident



Michelle Bartov holds Annabelle Raschio's hand and a sign during a march against hate through downtown John Day Tuesday, Aug. 15.

John Fiedor said.

He said people need to come together to counter organized hate, violence and bigotry.

"You need to drive hate back into the closet," he said. "It's a skeleton. It needs to go back in the closet and stay hidden."



Residents hold signs and chant during a march against hate through downtown John Day Tuesday, Aug. 15.



William Lloyd holds a sign showing a heart during a march against hate through downtown John Day Tuesday, Aug. 15.

## REPORTER

The Blue Mountain Eagle, a family-owned weekly newspaper in a stunningly beautiful Oregon community, seeks an energetic, dedicated reporter.

The Eagle is located in John Day, where seeing deer in front yards is normal and traffic is unheard of, just three hours from Bend and Pendleton. Surrounded by scenic forests and dissected by mountain streams, the location offers year-round recreational opportunities, including fishing, hunting, backpacking, camping, snowmobiling and horseback riding.

Despite the picturesque environment, the community is at the center of an evolving natural resource restoration economy, which gains statewide and even national attention.

Despite the small-town charm, the residents are engaged and politically active in local and national debates, and hard-hitting stories are never hard to find. Ongoing topics include state and federal policies, forest health, logging, public lands grazing, water supply, wildlife habitat improvements and wildfire resilience, in addition to coverage of small-town life and local government. The position offers a wealth of breaking news and enterprise opportunities.

Serving the community for 146 years, the Eagle is the oldest weekly newspaper in Oregon and is part of EO Media Group, an award-winning and innovative news organization with an active family of owners. This position offers excellent advancement opportunities in a company that prefers to hire from within. EO Media Group owns 11 newspapers and 17 websites that provide accurate, fair and timely reporting about the people and issues impacting the communities we serve in the Pacific Northwest, reflecting the responsibility and spirit of a free press.

We seek a journalist who is passionate about local news and excited about the opportunity to publish in print, online and through social media. Candidates must be able to develop story ideas, take photographs, develop sources, prepare website and social media updates and work in a cooperative team environment. Journalistic integrity is a must.

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