

## Bounds bound for judicial committee

Hermiston lawyer nominated twice for powerful bench

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**  
STAFF WRITER

Ryan Bounds will go before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Wednesday, bringing him one step closer to the bench of the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals despite the objections of Oregon's two senators.

A Hermiston native and an assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon, Bounds was twice nominated by President Donald Trump for the court, and was recommended for a hearing along with three other candidates by a bipartisan committee appointed by Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley as well as U.S. Rep. Greg Walden.

Wyden and Merkley, both Democrats, released a joint statement on Monday excoriating the Senate Judiciary Committee, which is controlled by Republicans, for holding the hearing in the wake of their objections because of "inflammatory writings revealing his archaic and alarming views about sexual assault, the rights of workers, people of color, and the LGBTQ community."

"It's a shame the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee is further diminishing any sense of respect for comity and fairness in the Senate," the senators wrote. "For six years while Democrats controlled the Senate and President Obama was in office, no judicial nominee moved forward over the objections of the home state senators. Refusing to play by the

rules when the rules don't suit you is bad enough, but in government it fuels cynicism, partisanship, and public disgust."

Neither senator has issued a "blue slip" in favor of Bounds, a stamp of approval from senators when the president nominates a judicial candidate from their home state. Federal judge candidates don't usually advance to a committee hearing without a that slip.

In a student-run publication Stanford University in the 1990s, Bounds, then an undergraduate, railed against "multiculturalists" on campus, universities that punished or expelled students accused of rape without proving their case "beyond a reasonable doubt," students protesting a union-busting hotel, and the idea of "sensitivity" after intoxicated athletes vandalized a gay pride statue.

After the op-eds were publicized, Bounds said he regretted "the objectionable words and views recited from three or four of my college op-eds (that) do not reflect the views I have hewn to as a lawyer and, frankly, as a grown-up."

Although both Oregon senators oppose Bounds, neither sits on the Senate Judiciary Committee.

If Bounds receives approval from the committee and confirmation from the full U.S. Senate, the 44-year-old will achieve a historical rarity.

The last time federal judicial nominees advanced to the Senate Judiciary Committee without a blue slip from both home state senators was in 2003 and 2004, and none of the four candidates were confirmed, according to McClatchy.



Ryan Bounds



Clara Beas Fitzgerald, left, encourages the eating contest's youngest competitor during Hermiston's Cinco de Mayo celebration Saturday. [More photos on page A15.](#)

STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL

## Cinco de Mayo offers celebration of culture

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
STAFF WRITER

Hermiston's Cinco de Mayo event spread across more real estate than ever this year as the celebration of Mexican heritage took over the grassy acres of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.

Rainstorms Saturday and Sunday afternoons may have kept a few people away from the weekend-long event, but crowds were still enjoying a mixture of carnival rides, food booths, contests, a beer garden and live entertainment. State and local political candidates were also out in force, setting up booths and meeting with constituents ahead of next week's election.

Itzahiana Uriarte, one of the three Cinco de Mayo court members, was enjoying a few tacos Saturday before stepping up on stage to introduce the court and

help with an eating contest.

She said she saw her role on the court as a representative of Latino culture in the community, and was honored to speak at the Hermiston city council recently.

"It was mostly my mom's idea because she thought, I don't know, that I was capable, and then I got excited about the thought of it," she said.

People sometimes incorrectly refer to Cinco de Mayo as "Mexican independence day," but Uriarte explained the celebration marks the day that Mexico defeated a larger and more well-equipped army in the Battle of Puebla. Uriarte said winning the battle was a "great victory" to celebrate as a way for Mexican-Americans to recognize their Mexican heritage and culture.

Jessica Rodriguez, who was visiting the celebration from Pasco with Ricky Chi-

cas, also alluded to Cinco de Mayo as a celebration of heritage.

"It just brings back memories of the culture, and we can interact with people who came from the same area as us," she said.

Part of that cultural celebration, of course, is also the traditional food, she said as she started in on a plate of authentic tacos from her parents' food stand set up at EOTEC.

Rodriguez and Chicas said they were impressed with Saturday's event, and Chicas said he was looking forward to the live bands starting later.

Alejandra Aviles, who was watching some of the contests going on Saturday afternoon, said she was also looking forward to the bands. She said she comes to Hermiston's Cinco de Mayo celebration every year in anticipation of the music.

Before the bands came

on, a series of contests were held on the stage. The first was an eating contest, which challenged a table full of children to eat six Gansitos, a chocolate-covered cake with cream and berry filling.

The winner of the day (and the La Palma gift certificate) was Edwin Velasco, 9.

"I feel great, and I say thank you to the other kids who worked hard to win too," he said after his big win.

Before the contests began, the national anthem of Mexico and the national anthem of the United States of America were both sung, and city councilor Clara Beas Fitzgerald thanked everyone for coming and the sponsors of the event, which was in a new location this year after outgrowing downtown and Butte Park.

"Every year it is bigger and more beautiful," she said in Spanish.

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