OREGON EAGLE
Restoring hope to Oregonians everywhere
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Oregon's Future Debated: Will it Be Kotek or Drazan?

By Richard Emmons

On Oct. 1, Democrat Gov. Tina Kotek and Republican Sen. Christine Drazan had their first televised debate of 2026, held at the University of Oregon school of journalism. Here are extended answers to many of the questions asked of the two gubernatorial candidates during the debate. A link to watch the full debate is found at the end of the article.

In her opening statement, Kotek touted her accomplishments in the legislature: "And when I was in the legislature, I kept fighting. I passed paid family leave. I raised the minimum wage, and I expanded access to health care. … And yes, every single day, I defend our state from President Donald Trump."

Drazan called out Kotek's record as governor in her opening statement, saying, "Four years ago, Tina Kotek told Oregonians that she would solve the problems and challenges facing our state. She hasn't. On all the issues that we care about – homelessness, affordability, schools, our economy, spending – she has failed."

Affordability

Drazan pointed to affordability as Oregon's most pressing problem. "There's no question that the number one issue facing families across our state is affordability. Families are being crushed under some of the highest taxes in the nation, some of the heaviest regulatory burden across the nation that actually translates into increased costs for families. I am committed to ensuring that we reduce the burden on Oregon families."

Kotek countered this by saying that Drazan had voted against bills supporting low-income tax credits, data center power requirements and building more housing in Oregon.

Drazan said in response, "Everything that's happened that's driven costs here has been through her, either as speaker of the House or governor.



Sen. Christine Drazan and Gov. Tina Kotek at the gubernatorial debate on the University of Oregon campus on Oct. 1, 2026. (Photo by Will Yurman/Lookout Eugene-Springfield/Pool)

She has personally voted for over $30 billion of tax increases. I'm proud to have stood with Oregon families and stopped her $15 billion tax increase at the end of the last long session, which Oregonians eventually rejected at the ballot box."

Education

The next question was: "K-12 funding went up by about $1.5 billion, but fourth-grade reading scores rank worst in the nation. Why hasn't more money produced better results?"

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Believe It or Not: President Trump's Top 25 Achievements

By Rod D. Martin

With the midterms coming, an astonishing number of Republican voters cannot name three things President Trump has accomplished. Which is remarkable when you consider that Donald Trump has accomplished more in a year and a half than any other president ever did in four.

Indeed, he has accomplished so much, so fast, across so many fronts that most people cannot keep up. The Enemedia buries the victories, while Republicans do an abysmal job of explaining them.

This is not a list of promises. It's a list of laws enacted, cases won, policies implemented, agreements secured and measurable results.

Trump restored American safety and sovereignty

1. He made the border a real border again.

In a matter of months, Trump reduced illegal border crossings to their lowest level in half a century. Catch-and-release is finished. The wall is going up and even being expanded, "Remain in Mexico" is back, and the administration reduced releases into the country by an incredible 99.9%.

2. He reversed mass migration.

America recorded negative net migration in 2025 for the first time in at least half a century. So far, nearly 3 million illegal aliens have left the country, whether voluntarily or involuntarily: more than 675,000 forcibly deported and the rest "self-deported." Citizenship and the law actually mean something again.

3. He signed the Laken Riley Act – and required detention of criminal illegal aliens.

Named for an innocent girl murdered by an illegal alien, the Laken Riley Act requires federal authorities to detain illegals arrested for theft, burglary, shoplifting, assaulting police, or any crime causing death or serious injury. It also lets states sue officials who refuse to enforce it.

4. History's biggest drop in violent crime, lowest rate in 126 years.

According to FBI data, violent crime in America dropped an incredible 9.7% in 2025 – the largest one-year decline in history. Murder fell 18.1%, robbery fell 18.5%. And America's violent crime rate is its lowest since 1900.

This is what happens when you put the National Guard on the streets in crime-ridden blue cities: fewer victims, safer streets and better futures for America's poorest.

See Trump's Top 25, Page 11

Legalizing Drugs Has Made Homelessness in Oregon a Death Sentence

By Kevin Dahlgren
Truth On The Streets

Homelessness is a death sentence in cities where ideology replaces intervention, and too often the system funded to prevent those deaths fails to act before it is too late. Over the course of my work, I have witnessed well over a hundred people die, found hundreds of bodies and witnessed several hundred overdoses. The reality is simple: The longer someone remains on the streets, the greater the likelihood that person will die prematurely. Drugs are one of the most common causes, particularly in the fentanyl era.

When Oregon voters approved the decriminalization of possession of small amounts of hard drugs in 2020, with the law taking effect in 2021, I watched the crisis deteriorate at a speed I could never have imagined. Whatever the intentions behind the policy, what I witnessed on the streets was more open drug use, more addiction, more overdoses, and more death. It was bad policy, and bad



Credit: Photo by Tara Faul

policy can kill. I have personally known homeless people who died from overdoses, fires, beatings, drownings, stabbings, shootings, strangulation, heart attacks, cancer and other causes. Some deaths were sudden. Others hap

See Death Sentence, Page 22

Publisher's Letter

Yes, it's campaign season with leaves falling from trees and mailboxes filling up with political postcards.

Our Oregon Eagle mailbox has been full lately with hundreds of checks from folks who responded to our first-ever fundraising letter. Thank you!

Didn't get our fundraising letter? It's likely because you're one of a thousand-plus Oregonians who receive a complimentary newspaper due to your position or vocation, and you didn't ask to receive it. For example ...

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- Oregon's Supreme Court justices and many district judges
- All county commissioners from Oregon's 36 counties
- The mayor, city council and city manager of Oregon's 40 most populated cities
- Over 200 pastors in churches throughout Oregon
- Over 80 local chambers of commerce
- And many others

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Two more things ...

Remember, your vote won't count unless you fill out your ballot and put it in a drop box or drop it in the mail. Then please call 10 friends and ask them to vote!

• • • • • •

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Thank you for supporting the Oregon Eagle.



For God and country,
Richard Emmons
Publisher and Editor
Oregon Eagle

Restoring hope to Oregonians everywhere.

Our Welfare-Warfare State Is in its Final Days

By Ron Paul, M.D.

It took around 200 years for U.S. government debt to reach $1 trillion. By contrast, in less than half a year, a trillion was added to bring the debt total to the $40 trillion it reached last summer. According to the Peterson Foundation, U.S. government debt is on a path to reach $50 trillion within the next six years.

Despite promising to reduce government spending in all three of his presidential campaigns, President Trump, with the assistance of congressional Republicans and Democrats, has continued to grow the government debt.

Concerns over all but a handful of politicians in Washington, D.C., supporting adding to the government's debt, along with worries over the effects of the ongoing Iran war, caused the interest rate on long term Treasury bonds (referred to as the yield) to increase. They reached their highest level since June of 2007 – a little over a year before the beginning of the great recession.

Following the yield increase, the Treasury Department announced that it would start purchasing at least twice the amount of long-term bonds that it had previously planned to purchase, reducing the supply of long-term bonds in an effort to reduce the yield. The Treasury's intervention initially lowered yields. However, the next day the yield on Treasury bonds rose again.

The Treasury and the Federal Reserve will feel continued pressure to keep interest rates low. This is because a small percentage increase in interest rates can cause a big increase in U.S. debt payments.

By keeping interstate rates artificially low, the Federal Reserve and the Treasury weaken the value of the dollar. This, along with the skyrocketing fuel prices as a result of the Iran war, is why wages are not keeping pace with the rising cost of living. Even many of the Americans whose paychecks are increasing are falling behind.

This erosion of the dollar's value is why 29% of Americans have used "buy now, pay later" loans in the last year to pay for expenses such as rent and groceries. Another consequence of the dollar's shrinking value is that, according to a survey by digital finance company Achieve, 53% of Americans are carrying credit card balances for necessary expenses.

British historian Niall Ferguson has argued that empires are at risk when government spends more on servicing its debt than on so-called national security. It seems as if the Trump administration is responding to this argument with the worst possible solution. It is proposing a huge increase in already bloated military spending, ensuring "national security" spending can keep ahead of yearly interest payments on the national debt. Instead of paying more for the military-industrial complex and foreign intervention, the U.S. government should be focused on reducing spending that causes the continuing growth in debt.

America's welfare-warfare state appears to be in its final days. The economic crisis that will lead to the end of the current system will likely involve the rejection of the dollar's reserve currency status. This will cause a collapse in the dollar's value. In this situation, Americans will have an opportunity to replace the authoritarianism of both the left and right wing of the ruling uniparty with volunteerism in our economic lives, our personal lives and our dealings with other countries.

Dr. Ron Paul is a former member of Congress and Distinguished Counselor to the Mises Institute. Copyright © 2026 by Ron Paul Institute. ronpaulinstitute.org

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Proverbs 3:5-6
Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.
Matthew 6:33
But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

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Editorial

There is No Question: For a Better Oregon, Vote for Christine Drazan

This year's governor's race features a rematch between Democratic Gov. Tina Kotek and Republican challenger Sen. Christine Drazan.

The Sept. 27 OPB poll shows Drazan holding a small lead over Kotek, 47% to 46%.

Unlike four years ago, Oregon voters can judge Kotek on the basis of her achievements as governor. She has announced no major changes. She admits there is more to do.

Drazan says it will take new leadership in Salem to take Oregon in a new direction. She outlined this new direction in what she calls "The Drazan Plan."

Both agree that Oregon has major problems that affect the daily lives of Oregonians across the state.

Let's consider which candidate is more likely to lead Oregon toward real solutions to these problems.

Education: If our children are our future, Oregon public schools must do better. Math and reading skills remain below pre-pandemic levels. Drazan has children in the public schools. She knows how bad things are for teachers and students alike. Who is more likely to bring back academic proficiency requirements for high school graduation? Who is more likely to prioritize academic excellence and achievement over wokeness and sexuality training? Kotek or Drazan?

Housing Affordability: Oregon's land-use laws limit single-family home zoning to less than 1% of Oregon's land. Most Oregonian Millennials cannot afford to buy a home. We must do better, or our adult children will leave the state and take the grandkids with them. Who is more likely to make homes more affordable? Kotek or Drazan?

Homelessness: Our city streets are a mess and unsafe for citizens and homeless alike. While speaker of the House, Kotek passed HB 3115, which allows homeless people to sleep and rest on public property such as parks and sidewalks. This means Oregon cities do not benefit from Grants Pass' victory at the U.S. Supreme Court. Who is more likely to fix this law? Kotek or Drazan?

Drug Abuse: Drug legalization has proven to be a deadly disaster for drug users. Parents and grandparents worry about taking children to neighborhood parks. "Harm reduction" is a failed policy. Who is more likely to fix this problem? Kotek or Drazan?

Transportation: The good news is I-5 is being rebuilt through downtown Portland. The bad news is the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project will still have just two through-traffic lanes when completed in 2033-34. Most of this project is unfunded. The I-5 bridge replacement over Columbia River is expected to cost over $14 billion and be completed in 2045. ODOT needs a new direction and fresh ideas. Who is more likely to improve ODOT? Kotek or Drazan?

Cost of Government: Oregon's state budget has doubled over the past 10 years, yet problems have gotten worse. Has your family budget doubled over the past 10 years? Who is more likely to put Oregon state government on a much-needed diet? Kotek or Drazan?

Socialism: There are Democrats affiliated with the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) on the Portland City Council and in the state legislature. Who is more likely to push back against the DSA? Kotek or Drazan?

President Trump: Gov. Kotek wants to "protect" us from Donald Trump. In a recent campaign ad, Drazan asks, "Who will protect us from Tina Kotek?" Based upon the past four years, not the Democrat-controlled state legislature or supreme court.

If Kotek has effectively solutions to Oregon's social and economic problems, wouldn't she have implemented them over the past four years? Has she held back her best ideas for her second term? Or is she out of ideas?

The election of Christine Drazan will not cause a revolution in Oregon. It will end decades of single-party rule in Salem. Democrats and Republicans will need to work together to get things done.

A vote for Gov. Kotek is a vote for more of the same. A vote for Sen. Drazan is a vote for change and a better future.

We have a secret ballot. No one needs to know that you voted against the status quo by voting for Drazan.

Please vote for Christine Drazan to be our next governor.

Richard Emmons

Why Your Vote Matters

Over the years, I've heard many excuses from people who don't vote, including ignorance, apathy and forgetfulness. Yet by far the No. 1 reason is "my vote won't make a difference."

In a very narrow sense, that might be true. In over 40 years of voting, I have never voted in an election decided by my one vote.

However, a small number of likeminded citizens will make a difference when they vote for a particular candidate.

These citizens can also make a difference when they don't bother to vote. By not voting, a different candidate can win the election.

Let's look at how this worked out in Oregon Senate District 3, now held by Sen. Jeff Golden of Ashland. When he announced his retirement, he chose Tonia Moro as his desired successor.

The Democratic primary in May had five candidates. In a very close race, Denise Krause defeated Tonia Moro by just 203 votes out of 17,847 votes cast.

The Republican nominee for Senate district 3 is Brad Hicks, best-known in Jackson County as the past president and CEO of the Medford and Jackson County Chamber of Commerce. He faces Krause rather than Moro in the general election.

More than 15,000 Democratic voters chose not to vote in the Senate District 3 primary election. Only 205 votes would have made the difference as who won the primary.

This example shows how a tiny number of voters can sway an election.

I won't presume to tell you how to vote in the hundreds of state and local races being contested throughout Oregon this November.

However, I will ask you to vote – because your vote matters.

Richard Emmons

Letters to the Editor



Dems Bring Oregon Economy Back to the Stone Age

Oregon Democrats seem hellbent to drive all tax-generating businesses out of Oregon. Businesses are fleeing Oregon in droves, costing millions in lost tax revenue. The Corporate Activity Tax is a hidden sales tax crippling and destroying businesses. Our DEI "sanctuary state" and the climate-crisis hoax is also devastating prosperity.

But instead of performing desperately needed spending reform, Tina Kotek just pushes her showtime "Prosperity Council" to feign she actually is addressing these problems. She and her Democrat cohorts may have good intentions, but they are completely lacking fundamental business sense. Their goal appears to be to reduce Oregon to a net-zero Stone Age economy. This anti-business squandering circus has been going on for 40 years. It is past time for a course correction!

Please vote Republican this upcoming election. I, too, have serious questions about Republicans on the national level regarding inflation and Iran. But voting for state Republicans is a completely different ball game than the national! You are not voting for Trump! By voting Republican this next election, you have the opportunity to reverse Oregon's downward spiral and replace it with a much higher quality of life! Vote Republican!

Tom Clunie
Ashland, Oregon

[Editor: Unfortunately, good intentions haven't made housing more affordable or homelessness and drug addiction more scarce in Oregon.]

Big Counties Don't Consider Little Counties

Are we citizens who live in the 30 least-populated counties of Oregon supposed to feel like unwanted stepchildren of the highly populated six counties? By voting in Salem as if our opinions do not matter, you urban areas push us to support the State of Jefferson and even become part of Idaho.

How can we express ourselves more than through the votes of our Rep. Dwayne Yunker and state Sen. Noah Robinson? How can the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife justify removing the Murphy Dam despite its effect on the livelihoods of our area farmers and ranchers?

Isn't it time that the liberal left wakes up and thinks of others? Soon it will be time to vote in Oregon. Isn't it time to think of the minority of residents who live in rural areas?

John Ahlstrom, 90 years old
Grants Pass, Oregon

[Editor: In a similar way, a little state like Oregon gets ignored or pushed around by the federal government. Something to consider.]

How is Oregon Doing? Let Me Count the Ways

Reminder if you are voting in November: In Oregon under our current administration:

1. Oregon often ranks 2nd or 3rd in homelessness in the nation behind states like New York, Hawaii and California.
2. Oregon ranks 49th for adult access to mental health services.
3.Oregon is 2nd in the nation for overall rates of alcohol and drug addiction.
4. Oregon ranks 50th (last) in access to drug and alcohol addiction treatment.
5. Oregon ranks 47th in the country in education.
6. Oregon's economy ranked 48th in the country.
7. Oregon's Crime and Corrections ranked 46th in the country.
8. Oregon ranks first (No. 1) in the United States for registered sex offenders on a per capita basis (per 100,000 residents).
9. Oregon's housing affordability is ranked 46th nationally for high housing costs relative to local median income.
10. Oregon has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country, sitting at 48th overall with a 5.1% unemployment rate.
11. Oregon ranks 49th in the nation for corporate tax competitiveness, which is major disadvantage for attracting and keeping businesses in Oregon.
12. Oregon has no sales tax. That's OK, but Oregon offsets that by being ranked first in the nation for individual income tax burden as a percentage of personal income.

Joseph Rice
Josephine County

[Editor: Didn't your mom teach you, "If you don't have something nice to say, don't say anything!"? Let me try, "Yes, but other than that Oregon is not doing too shabby at all."]

70 Years After Escaping a Communist Country

I grew up in a communist country and escaped the secret police in 1956. With God's help, I made it to the United States in 1957. My crime was that I wrote flyers to hold out for U.S. help. We revolted against the Russian occupation.

It's a long story, but Americans need to know how rotten communism is. They have no clue! I tried for 70 years to open their minds. Some listened; most did not thanks to the extremely poor quality education and brainwashing by university professors.

I'm still fighting for this country, the best country in the world.

You are in our prayers. God Bless you and everyone that supports you.

Elizabeth Barrow
Grants Pass

[Editor: Wow, thank you for sharing your story and for supporting the work of the Oregon Eagle. May you inspire many more.]

"The fact that so many politicians are shameless liars is not only a reflection on them, it is also a reflection on us. When the people want the impossible, only liars can satisfy."

— Thomas Sowell

Hasan Piker: U.S. Worse Than Al-Qaeda When it Comes to Terrorism

By Al Perrotta
The Daily Signal

Just days after America commemorated the 9/11 attacks that killed 3,000 of its citizens, influencer Hasan Piker declared the United States a greater purveyor of terrorism than the ones who did the deed.

Appearing on "The Axios Show," Piker, who previously declared "America deserved 9/11," confirmed his earlier statement that "America is the top dog on terrorism." Host Alex Thompson followed up by asking, "Do you think America is worse than al-Qaeda?" His response: "Pound-for-pound, as far as the number of deaths, yes. We have caused tremendous terror all around the world."

In response to the outcry over his remarks, Piker doubled down on X: "Our elites terrorize the entire world while ordinary Americans continue to foot the bill. We spent trillions 'fighting' the terror we created to provide cover for our oil barons stealing 3rd world resources."

While the sentiment is little surprise coming from someone who's declared "America deserved 9/11," Heritage Action noted the bigger issue with Piker's beliefs. "He's not an outlier," Heritage Action posted on X. "He's a reflection of what the modern Democrat Party has become and who it chooses to elevate."

Piker has made multiple joint appearances with potential 2028 presidential candidate Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y , and has spoken at the AOC-Sen. Bernie Sanders "Tax the Rich" rallies. The Twitch podcaster was an early backer of New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani and attended his victory party. Rep. Ro Khanna, D-Calif., has argued Democrats should engage with Piker rather than cancel him.

Most notably, Piker campaigned at the side of Michigan Democrat U.S. Senate candidate Abdul El-Sayed. Now, in the heat of a tight Senate race against Republican Mike Rogers, El-Sayed is trying to distance himself from the influencer. Whereas just months ago, El-Sayed flew Piker in for a campaign event, now El-Sayed is describing him in a statement to Axios as a "social media streamer" whose words don't "carry much weight" with him.

"I do not agree with this statement [on al-Qaeda], nor do I give much weight to the statements made by a social media streamer," he said. "I am more concerned with the dangerous policies of Donald Trump and Mike Rogers that are raising the prices of gas, groceries and healthcare for Michiganders."

Rogers has repeatedly tied his opponent to the antisemitic, anti-American Piker, describing him at last month's Republican National Committee Midterm Convention as El-Sayed's "chosen" "running mate," adding that "together, they attack America, excuse extremism and treat our country like the villain."

Echoing Heritage Action, Democrat Sen. John Fetterman, whose strong support of Israel and calls for common sense have made him an outcast within his caucus, sees Piker's impact on his party.

"I think I've lost to Piker," Fetterman told the Washington Examiner. "Democrats love him. They campaign with him and they defend him."



Credit: @Popstonox on X.com

Note: This story originally appeared at The Daily Signal. dailysignal.com

Al Perrotta is a contributing editor for the Daily Signal.

The 22 U.S. House Seats That Will Determine Our Future

By Jeff Childers

Try to follow me here. I'm not minimizing the importance of the midterms. If we Republicans lose Congress, the next two years will be a painful slog through Democrat impeachments, investigations, commissions and made-for-streaming grandstanding events that will make the January 6th Committee's televised hearings look like the warm-up comedian. Nobody wants that.

But, and here I tread carefully, even if that does happen, it will *still* never be as awful as what we endured during 2018-2020. During the second half of Trump 1.0, when Democrats clawed themselves a narrow House majority, they enjoyed the deep state's full support. They simply won't have that this time. They'll be on their own. They will face further disadvantages, which I could list for you; for the sake of time, I will set them aside for now.

We do not *want* to lose the midterms, but we would survive it. We'd be fine. Trump's ambitious agenda would be limited but not stopped. Progress would continue, albeit slowly and painfully, and not at the breakneck pace we yearn for. Still – this president has already accomplished more in two years than in most eight-year presidential tenures.

True, his many executive orders will not become laws, leaving them vulnerable to the next Democrat president's autopen. But those laws are not guaranteed to pass even if Republicans do keep Congress. And Trump's team is proving delightfully capable of repurposing existing laws – like it did with tariffs, asylum seekers and the SAVE database. Those will be harder for a new administration to unravel.

There's more to consider. Even though corporate media is running Trump's "low" approval polls wall-to-wall, those polls will have almost *nothing* to do with the outcome. Midterm congressional elections are a different beast than presidential elections. It's not really a national election. Thanks to the way congressional districts are drawn, there are only a *very few* real toss-up seats.

The Cook Political Report's latest ratings – updated Sept. 25 – put 22 House seats in the toss-up column: 17 currently held by Republicans and five by Democrats. Cook noted that, even if those 22 split evenly, Democrats would land at 219 seats, a bare majority, and only +4 over where they are now. It would take a "blue wave" to get them to 230, which would be their absolute best day.

The Senate is nearly impossible for Democrats. *Everything* would have to go their way, and that assumes stroke victim John Fetterman, D-Pa., doesn't flip. Media barely mention the Senate anymore.

And those 22 toss-up House seats – a mere handful – will *not* be decided by Trump's popularity, the price of gas, or the masked fake lesbians currently boycotting the Last Ditch dive bar. These contests will be decided by one thing and one thing only: *Turnout*. Midterm elections are historically low-turnout elections where the out-of-power party holds an advantage, thanks to the aggravation factor.

In low-turnout elections, the party that hauls the most souls to the polls wins. Period. Here is the entire list of toss-up races:

2026 HOUSE RATINGS — SEPTEMBER 25, 2026

22 toss-up seats

Incumbents and Trump's 2024 margin

DISTRICT	INCUMBENT / STATUS		TRUMP '24	DISTRICT	INCUMBENT / STATUS		TRUMP '24
AZ-6	Juan Ciscomani	R	+0.7	NY-17	Mike Lawler	R	−0.6
CA-22	David Valadao	R	+1.9	OH-7	Max Miller	R	+11.1
CO-8	Gabe Evans	R	+1.8	OH-9	Marcy Kaptur	D	+10.6
FL-14	Kathy Castor	D	+10.5	PA-7	Ryan Mackenzie	R	+3.2
FL-22	Open / redrawn seat		+10.3	PA-8	Rob Bresnahan	R	+8.5
FL-25	Jared Moskowitz	D	+9.1	PA-10	Scott Perry	R	+5.2
IA-1	Mariannette Miller-Meeks	R	+8.5	TX-15	Monica de la Cruz	R	+17.9
IA-3	Zach Nunn	R	+4.4	TX-34	Vicente Gonzalez	D	+10.1
MI-7	Tom Barrett	R	+1.3	VA-2	Jen Kiggans	R	+0.2
MI-10	Open seat Prev. John James (R)		+6.5	WA-3	Marie Gluesenkamp Perez	D	+3.3
NC-11	Chuck Edwards	R	+9.5	WI-3	Derrick Van Orden	R	+7.4

R Republican D Democrat + Trump win − Trump loss

Trump minus Harris, in percentage points. 2024 votes on 2026 district lines.

Sources: Cook Political Report (ratings, Sept. 25, 2026); The Downballot (votes)

Credit: coffeeandcovid.com

That's it. That's the whole list that will decide the fate of the House, and Republicans hold a structural advantage in terms of incumbency and the Trump 2024 margin. Nobody is predicting a blue wave. Polls are useless at this point, not just because the pollsters lie, but because they can't accurately predict who'll actually go down and vote on Nov. 3.

You still with me? To hold the House and prevent The Democrat Circus, Round Two, we need only hang onto a little over half of those 22 toss-up seats. Readers in those districts, take note. Readers outside those districts, take note if you want to help by throwing a few donation dollars one way or another.

Meanwhile, the GOP can focus on 22 House races and about six Senate races. That job is much more manageable than the corporate media keep telling everybody. (Of course, Democrats face a similarly concise target zone, which is why no one is sanguine.)

Jeff Childers is an attorney and the author of Coffee and Covid. coffeeandcovid.com

"The best thing to give to your enemy is forgiveness; to an opponent, tolerance; to a friend, your heart; to your child, a good example; to a father, deference; to your mother, conduct that will make her proud of you; to yourself, respect; to all others, charity." — *Benjamin Franklin*

NIH to Open Vaccine Injury Research Center

By Jeff Childers

Finally, for folks whose issue isn't elections but rather *needles*, this month delivered some truly incredible news. Science.org (and only Science) reported, "Exclusive: New NIH research center on vaccine harms takes shape." This is Big Pharma's worst nightmare. And it is *about time*.

"The U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) is preparing to launch a clinical research program," Science reported, "to study people who believe they were *harmed by vaccines*, including COVID-19 vaccines." That is promising enough, but it was not only that. "The agency also plans to fund outside researchers to study adverse effects of vaccines," the article said, "piggybacking off existing studies of people with vaccine-related illnesses."

I honestly don't know how they keep doing it. The velocity of the Trump 2.0 administration is breathtaking. According to the article's sources, "a new research center on the NIH campus in Bethesda, Maryland, could start up in *mid-October*." That's less than a month away! Moving fast isn't just a sign of unprecedented bureaucratic efficiency. It's also a strategy to prevent political enemies from organizing an effective resistance, from bogging the new initiative down in red tape, gold-star committees, or dropping it into a political black hole like something accidentally created at CERN.

Needless to say, the *last thing* Big Pharma needs is more research into vaccine injuries, never mind a permanent research center and expanded funding for independent studies.

Who could oppose studying vaccine injuries? In public, scientists expressed tepid support. "It's really laudable," Kathryn Edwards, a pediatrician at Vanderbilt University, generously allowed of the effort. "But if it's not done in *a scientific way*," she warned, "it will be more antivaccine propaganda."

Presumably, when Dr. Edwards referred to "a scientific way," she meant something different from how the establishment came up with the protective effects of homemade cloth masks and six-foot distancing. And I'm *sure* she meant "a scientific way" different from ignoring vaccine safety signals and sending alarmed researchers finding sudden deaths cease-and-desist notices. Do I have that right?

Remarkably, and suggesting a shift in how the mainstream science platforms are reporting on vaccine injuries, Science quoted – without sneering, scare quotes, or defamatory labels – a vax-injury activist who is a retired doctor who was herself injured by the COVID jabs.

Dr. Danice Hertz's questions were all fair, smart and on the nose. What is truly astonishing is that those fundamental questions – where the mRNA goes, how long it sticks around, and what it specifically affects – should remain *unanswered* six years after the jab rollouts. How did this happen? (Don't answer that.)

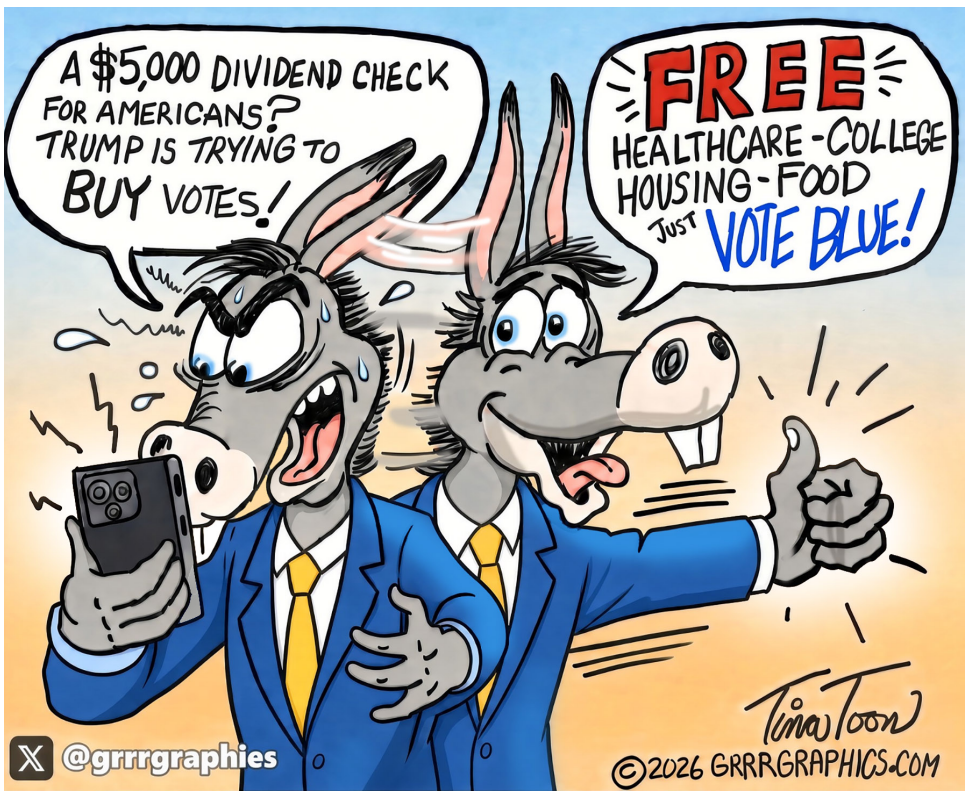
The article was short on details about the new vaccine injury research center or the expanded grant budget. To my trained eye, that is a good thing. It means the administration isn't broadcasting its plans, making it that much harder for pharma to marshal the troops to attack them. I've noticed these kinds of plans are the ones that usually land hardest, and land like an above-average elephant, when it is too late to stop them.

There's been much blackpilling about HHS Secretary Kennedy's plans for managing the vaccine industrial complex. Folks, fighting that isn't easy. But they continue making progress. It's just that the "MAGA betrayal" story gets covered widely across corporate media, while the Vaccine Injury Research Center gets a single exclusive in Science.

Welp! That's why you come *here*. So be encouraged.

Jeff Childers is an attorney and the author of Coffee and Covid. coffeeandcovid.com

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6 Ways Trump's Greenland Deal is 'America First'

By Arnaud Bertrand

We now have the actual text of the Greenland deal, so we can say how it compares to the existing 1951 arrangement and who, between Trump and Denmark, lied the most in their framing of it.

[Agreement text: myeagle.us/greenland]

Long story short – which may surprise some – the Danes lied the most: Trump is pretty much correct in saying that this new deal grants the U.S. control of Greenland.

Let's look into what changed compared to the 1951 deal.

1. This is now a permanent arrange ment: Whereas the existing 1951 deal only lasted as long as NATO existed, this one "does not have an end date and may only be amended by mutual consent."

It even survives a hypothetical future independence of Greenland: In that event, Denmark and Greenland must ensure that the independent Greenlandic state "affirmatively assume[s] all of the rights and obligations of the Kingdom of Denmark specified in this Agreement."

2. In the 1951 agreement, the U.S. could set up bases only where both governments agreed, and only on the basis of NATO planning. The new deal locks in three bases: The U.S. can "modernize and expand its activities" at Pituffik, its only base in Greenland until now, and "shall be allowed to establish an additional Defense Area at Narsarsuaq and Mestersvig." Further bases beyond these three can be justified by the defense of "the American continent," a U.S. interest rather than a NATO one.

Also, quite subtle but interesting: Article IV(iii) says that "the United States may establish additional defense areas in Greenland" and that consultations are then held "to decide implementation details based on mutual agreement." What this means is that the principle of a new base is automatically granted and only the implementation details require agreement.

Article VII also gives the U.S. "the right to raise concerns regarding construction, or change of use" of any building near a U.S. base, after which the parties decide together what to do. Which means that the U.S. has a say over civilian planning around its bases.

3. On U.S. military movement across Greenland, the wording change between the 1951 agreement and this new one is quite funny.

The 1951 text said (Art. V(3)): The U.S. "may enjoy ... the right of free access to and movement between the defense areas through Greenland, including territorial waters, by land, air and sea," but only "in accordance with general rules mutually agreed upon and issued by the appropriate Danish authority in Greenland."

The new one says: "The United States of America shall enjoy ... the right of free access to and movement between the Defense Areas through Greenland, including the Territorial Waters, by land, air and sea."

That's it: "May" becomes "shall," and the U.S. military movement no longer has to follow rules "issued by the appropriate Danish authority in Greenland." The U.S. also gets something new on top: "undersea access to and movement within the Territorial Waters," i.e. submarines.

4. Non-NATO exclusion: Non-NATO states are barred from military installations or a persistent presence in Greenland unless all three parties approve, giving the U.S. an effective permanent veto. The 1951 deal had no equivalent clause.

5. Investment screening: This is entirely new. "States or investors from a state that is not a member of NATO, a NATO partner, or an EU member state" (i.e. Russia, China, India, the Gulf states, etc.), "shall not be allowed to have (i) control, (ii) significant influence, or (iii) access to non-public information ... within Particularly Sensitive Sectors or Activities in the territory of Greenland (including the Territorial Waters), unless agreed between the Parties."

Again, it basically means that the U.S. has a permanent veto over who can invest in strategic sectors in Greenland, as far as non-NATO or EU states are concerned.

6. Lastly, in stark contrast with the 1951 deal, the framing of the deal changes significantly: This new deal is largely framed around the U.S.

The 1951 agreement existed only "for the benefit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization." The new one lists the defense of "the American continent" as an objective, celebrates "the irreplaceable role" of the United States military as well as "the United States' indispensable historical and ongoing contributions to the security and defense of Greenland," and names the establishment of Trump's "Golden Dome" missile defense system as a key goal.

So, to sum up:

- The U.S. secured a permanent military foothold that even an independent Greenland would inherit whether it likes it or not;
- The U.S. now has veto power over any non-NATO military presence in Greenland, and over who can invest in its strategic infrastructure and resources (beyond NATO and the EU);
- Denmark signed away its say over the principle of new U.S. bases, with only the right to discuss the "implementation details";
- Danish authorities no longer set the rules for U.S. military movement across the island;
- And all of it is now justified by the defense of "the American continent."

I don't know in which universe this even remotely "recognizes the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Kingdom and the Greenlandic people's right to self-determination," as Danish PM Mette Frederiksen put it.

Yes, the preamble of the text cynically "reaffirms" Danish sovereignty but, in my book, when you let a foreign country put bases on your soil, move its troops without following your rules and veto who else can come in, in perpetuity, after it spent two years threatening to take you by force, the word for that is anything but "recognized sovereignty."

Arnaud Bertrand is an entrepreneur who founded HouseTrip (acquired by TripAdvisor), and MeandQi.com.

Trump Unveils AI-Powered America.Gov to Streamline Federal Services

By Sarah Roderick-Fitch

(The Center Square) – Artificial intelligence took center stage in Washington, D.C., with the unveiling of a streamlined government website utilizing the emerging technology, as President Donald Trump hosted the nation's top tech leaders.

Trump headlined the launch of America.gov, where he signed an executive order consolidating federal resources on the website and streamlining 29,000 government websites into one.

The executive order directs all federal agencies to integrate with the AI-powered website to simplify government resources and services.

The president underscored that the purpose of the government is to serve the American people and criticized its ballooning.

"Washington bureaucracies have grown ever larger, more intrusive, and armies of federal bureaucrats have behaved as if your job is to answer to them," Trump told the audience. "All of that changes starting right now."

As part of the AI summit, Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced that passport applications will soon be fully available to complete online, including uploading passport photos. In addition, Rubio unveiled a new passport design, quipping, "more gold."

Dr. Mehmet Oz, administrator of the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, gave a tutorial on the Medicare side of the website.

The Center Square asked Oz how he would encourage older Americans who might be apprehensive about using the site and AI.

He said families could help older Americans use the site, adding that individuals can give family members access to check records.

"You can give your access to your children or to a relative, so a spouse can now check on their loved one's records. Kids can do the same, and they can see what you're doing as well if you want them to do it – you control it," Oz told The Center Square.

Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins told The Center Square that she believes the new site and use of AI will curb SNAP fraud.

"From my perspective, this is how we solve the fraud. So I think what AI is going to be able to do in SNAP with EBT cards, helping us really dive down and understand exactly what's happening, and then root that fraud out. I think this is going to be a game changer for that," Rollins told The Center Square.



President Donald Trump headlines an AI summit to unveil America.gov, signing an executive order joined by members of his cabinet. Photo: Sarah Roderick-Fitch / The Center Square

While the summit was being held just a few blocks from the White House, Trump met with some of the nation's top tech leaders, and the group signed an accord, holding each company "responsible for developing its own technology safely and in a way that builds trust with customers and the public."

The president also signed an executive order officially renaming artificial intelligence "super intelligence."

The Center Square requested cost figures and savings for the website, but the White House did not respond at the time of publication.

Sarah Roderick-Fitch is the Washington D.C. Bureau Chief for The Center Square. thecentersquare.com

Unsealed Docs: AI Learning Is Likely the 'Largest Theft of Labor in Human History'

By Dylan Kresak
Daily Caller News Foundation

OpenAI and Microsoft employees privately acknowledged their artificial intelligence products compete with the news outlets whose articles trained them, an unsealed court filing alleges.

OpenAI's head of ChatGPT, Nick Turley, wrote that the company's products "are largely substitutive, period" and will become even more so as the technology improves, according to a brief The New York Times and other news publishers made public last month in their Manhattan copyright case against the tech companies. Microsoft Director of Applied Science Brent Hecht warned that "millions of people around the world will soon consider large models 'hoovering up' all their work to be an astonishing theft of unprecedented proportions," the brief stated in part.

The Department of Justice previously told a federal judge that AI training is fair use because models learn patterns from text rather than duplicate it, an argument the companies' internal messages seemingly undercut.

Turley also wrote that publishers face an "existential threat" from those products, according to the brief.

The brief also cites a document describing the practice as potentially the "largest theft of labor in human history," and says Hecht recognized that a fair use win for the companies would arguably "make a complete mockery of the idea of 'fair use.'"

Microsoft and OpenAI each did not immediately respond to the DCNF's request for comment.

A tech policy expert said the statements cut against the companies' legal defense.

"These companies admit in their own internal communications to things that completely contradict their legal defense and their theory of fair use," Evan Swarztrauber, principal at CorePoint Strategies and a former adviser to Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairs Ajit Pai and Brendan Carr, told the DCNF. "[O]ne of the key tests for fair use is whether original product that was copied is going to be competed against and substituted for, and they literally say … [i]t's substitution.'"

Microsoft's own documents mentioned similar concerns about AI's effect on publishers.

"Our AI content strategy has started a 'doom loop' that will hurt the performance of our models and the entire web at the same time," a Microsoft document quoted in the filing read in part. "It is highly unusual that an end-product threatens the economic foundations of its essential suppliers, but that is the situation we have created for our LLM business."

Another internal document cited in the brief describes large language models as "a product that destroys its supply chain."

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella testified that talking to chatbots "has substituted" for visiting original sources and that "anything that is paywalled should be licensed" for training, the brief stated. Nadella also said he would have mandated OpenAI to retrain models if he knew it trained on paywalled material.

OpenAI co-founder and President Greg Brockman wrote that the models are "particularly good at predicting text of news articles," according to the filing.

When employee Nick Ryder told Brockman about "a hack to get around nytimes paywall" to help "scrape" the Times site, Brockman replied "ah nice," the brief stated. OpenAI's corporate representative testified he did not know

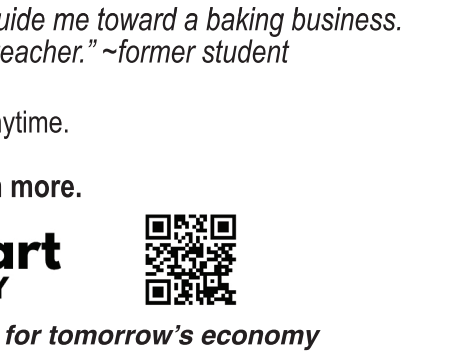
See Unsealed Docs, Page 23

"Work as if you were to live a thousand years, play as if you were to die tomorrow." – Benjamin Franklin

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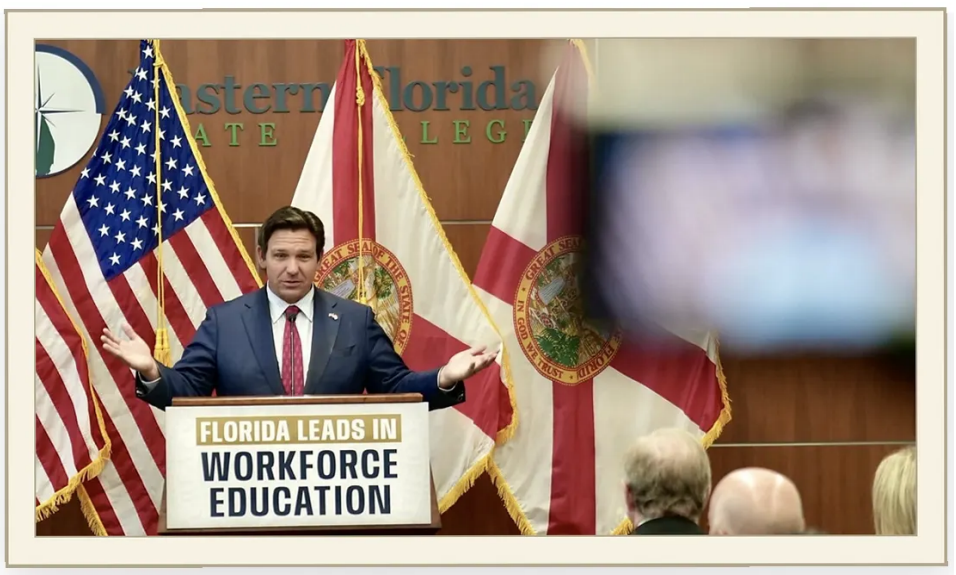
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Florida Breaks the Ice: Pell Grants Now Usable at Trade Schools



Gov. Ron DeSantis at Eastern Florida State College in Melbourne on Thursday. Credit: X@GovRonDeSantis

By Jeff Childers

Here's more good news for young Americans (especially in Florida), and more *bad* news for the ivy-clad halls of academia. The Miami Times reported, "Florida students can use Pell grants for workforce training, Gov. DeSantis says." Terrific Gov. Ron DeSantis is definitely not relaxing into his lame duck status. Florida is now the first state on board. If anything, he's already running for president in 2028.

First, Florida hired former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor Dr. Henry Mack to be its new education commissioner. Mack is specifically tasked with implementing one of President Trump's priorities: Workforce Pell grants for short-form programs, not just for "traditional higher education institutions."

A Pell grant is not a loan. It pays tuition for *useful* degrees – and students who qualify *don't* have to pay it back. It's not a lot of money, especially in the context of expensive "traditional" degrees for things like gender studies, interpretive polyamorous dance and feminist film criticism. But the new Workforce version – passed in last year's One Big Beautiful Bill Act – covers not just degrees but certifications for the kinds of high-wage, high-demand skills that regular universities won't touch with a 10-foot pride flagpole. Like *welding*.

Even better – and the reason why the universities sneer at these occupations – these kinds of certifications are short, fast and focused. The new Workforce grants generally apply to intensive training programs completed in eight to 15 weeks. That leaves practically no time for professors to teach students how wonderful socialism is (and how it's never *really* been tried), why America is systematically toxic, or how to organize and fund Tesla dealership protests using taxpayer money.

That is one problem. But Workforce students also have expectations, like *well-paying jobs* when they graduate, which is the kind of guarantee traditional colleges are somehow unwilling to offer, despite burdening *their* students with tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars in federally subsidized loans that last a lifetime.

It's bigger than you might think. Commissioner Mack offered examples of the "blue-collar" programs the Workforce grants can be used for, like "certified production technology, CNC machinists, rapid prototype specialist, automation, lean manufacturing, electronics aide, aluminum welding and fabrication, marine electrician, professional research diving, CDL, aviation mechanic, and last but certainly not least, many of our first responder programs, firefighters, EMT – critical occupations."

"You're talking about machinery, defense applications, things that are going to make these students very, very marketable," DeSantis said. "We're doing this, of course, to give students more opportunity to have productive lives, but it's also something writ large for our economy."

Even assuming that degreed students have some earning advantage over those with skilled trade credentials – an assumption the AI boom, or "SI boom," is making more arguable by the minute – that advantage is not enough to overcome the student loan debt penalty. A welder or aviation tech without a four-year degree (or loan) will own a house sooner, can start a family earlier and will generally own more assets by age 30 than the young person who spent four-plus years in college to gain a marginal salary advantage but also a crushing debt.

Furthermore, a trade skill virtually guarantees lifetime employment, cementing their status as permanently productive members of society. After all, nobody has ever outsourced a burst pipe to Mumbai. And, as their skills increase, such as welders specializing in underwater or defense welding, they can easily enter six-figure salary ranges, especially with overtime and performance bonuses.

This is not newly discovered wisdom. We've known for decades that many skilled occupations are better bets than non-STEM bachelor's degrees, especially when those degrees are burdened by loans. But until Trump's second term, no one had the stones to risk offending the Ivory Tower by focusing on alternatives to post-secondary education. Just ask *"Dirty Jobs"* host Mike Rowe, who has been a brave voice in the wilderness for 20 years.

Well, it's finally happening. More options are opening for young Americans. And the best news is that trade schools aren't overburdened with costly amenities, administrators and tenured professors whose skills are long out of date.

Jeff Childers is an attorney and the author of Coffee and Covid. coffeeandcovid.com

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Lawmakers Spar Over Government Unions' Political Activity

By Andrew Rice

(The Center Square) – Washington lawmakers and advocates sparred in September over regulating public employee unions because of their political activity and union dues supporting mostly Democratic candidates and progressive policies.

Aaron Withe, CEO of the Freedom Foundation, estimated that there are roughly 7 million members paying dues to four government worker unions. Withe told The Center Square that he is on a mission to persuade workers of the harms involved with union membership.

He estimated the average public employee in America is spending $1,100 per year in union dues.

"Most of that money isn't going toward things that best represent them or their values," Withe told The Center Square. "That $1,100 is far better off in their pocket than in the pocket of the radical political union's agenda."

Lawmakers on the U.S. House Workforce and Education Committee Sept. 15 sharply criticized the political agenda of workers unions, arguing it is not aligned with those they represent. Rep. Rick Allen, R-Ga., said most

See Government Unions, Page 23

Advertisement

Former Navy Nuclear Submariner Reveals the "Boring" 2-Hour-a-Week Method He Uses to Grow His Trading Account an Average of 1% a Week

Florida business owner shares the simple options trading framework he and his partner now teach others.

WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA — Most people picture stock trading as frantic and screen-glued. Troy Broussard set out to escape that.

A former Navy nuclear submariner who later built several software companies, Troy Broussard has a low tolerance for surprises. "As a nuke, you like boring," he says. He wanted his money managed the same way — quiet, consistent, predictable. That's why he created an approach that has produced a nearly flawless 98% win rate — even during market pullbacks and downturns.

"I call it Low Stress Trading," says Troy Broussard, author of *Troyonomics,* who has placed close to 50,000 trades with the framework. "We target 1% returns each week — about 4% a month. Through the magic of compounding that can add up to roughly 68% a year, almost like clockwork. And it takes less time than watching your favorite TV show — about as simple as checking your email."

A Lesson Learned in Chaos

The inspiration for Low Stress Trading traces to his teens. At 16, Broussard spent a year in São Paulo, Brazil, when inflation ran 20 to 30% — *per month.* While businesses around them collapsed, his host father quietly set aside a slice of each day's take, converted it to U.S. dollars, and stockpiled it. Those reserves became a lifeline. The lesson: small, disciplined, repeated moves can outlast almost anything.

The Day-Trading Detour

After spending tens of thousands of dollars on coaching, Broussard tried the exciting route first — crypto and day-trading. He had wins, gut-churning losses, and no life. "It failed the lifestyle test," he says. So he went looking for something duller: a long-established approach built around *selling* cash-secured puts rather than *buying* speculative options. With partner John Sanpietro, he spent years refining it into the Low Stress Options™ framework.

The 1% Mindset

The whole philosophy is based on one number — 1%.

- **A 1% weekly target —** some weeks more, some less, some nothing. An average, not a promise.
- **Only the 1% you need to know —** one primary strategy, simple, no exotic spreads.
- **About 1% of your week —** once learned, roughly 1–2 hours per week.

Why only 1%? Because a steady 1% a week compounds to about 68% a year — and selling puts tends to win often, since you collect the premium up front. "Making money is boring if you're doing it right," he says.

What It Is — And Isn't

Broussard is blunt about the limits. It's not day-trading, not passive income, not a savings account, and not a guarantee. The company won't run glossy testimonials: "No one else's results have any bearing on yours." Any investing carries risk but Broussard's framework works to minimize those risks.

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The Pressure Mounts on U.S. Universities

By J.K. Wall
World Magazine

As students return to campus this fall, U.S. universities are facing unprecedented financial pressure to change their ways.

New student enrollment is on pace to decline 15% due to a drop in births that began during the Great Recession and hasn't let up. International student enrollment is also down sharply due to a 36% decline in visas. And public support for universities, nearly all of which rely on taxpayer-funded loans and grants that cover tuition, is at its lowest point in decades: Seventy percent say higher ed is headed in the wrong direction.

Last summer, Education Secretary Linda McMahon tightened the screws on universities by issuing a letter – drafted with the input of the Association of American Universities (AAU) and some college presidents – that calls on universities to post public commitments to reform.

The letter asks for responses to a series of questions that call for transparent admissions, free exchange of ideas, intellectual pluralism, academic rigor, academic research free from foreign influence and affordable, high-return degrees.

"This forthright conversation with the American people is long overdue," McMahon wrote. "And it is the essential first step toward rebuilding trust in the sector."

Many Christians have felt that academic standards and viewpoint diversity have greatly diminished on secular campuses. Many have opted to attend or support Christian colleges, which have in large part resisted the most troubling trends in higher education.

But now Christian colleges face the same challenges as all other universities coming from changing demographics. There are simply fewer 18-year-olds graduating from high school for the next 18 years than there were before, shrinking the pool of candidates for college.

The drop in international students is even more painful for some universities, as they often pay full tuition.

In the case of many institutions, Americans don't feel they're getting a good deal in return for the higher costs.

In the past, universities have raised prices to keep their finances humming. But they may have reached the end of their ability to do that. Americans overwhelmingly told Pew Research last year that colleges are not affordable – 79% said the higher education system is doing a fair or poor job keeping tuition affordable versus just 12% who say it is doing a good or very good job.

And unlike on most other higher education issues, there is no difference based on political party.

The numbers back them up. A 2019 study by researchers at the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis found that while earning a bachelor's degree still yields higher incomes, the amount of extra wealth it produces has been shrinking and is now essentially zero for most demographic groups. That's in large part due to the additional debt students take on to pay for college.

From 1990 to 2020, average costs for students doubled, after adjusting for inflation, according to a report by the American Enterprise Institute. It found that external funding such as federal Pell grants had risen dramatically during that time – so much that if costs had simply risen as fast as inflation since 1990, every student at 4-year public colleges would now be able to attend tuition-free. But instead, universities largely kept those funds for themselves – while also increasing costs to students.

In the case of many institutions, Americans don't feel they're getting a good deal in return for the higher costs. Pew asked a series of questions about the educational quality of universities such as exposing students to a wide range of opinions, providing opportunities for students to express their own opinions, developing critical thinking and problem solving and preparing students for well-paying jobs. On every single one, more Americans said universities were doing a "fair or poor job" than said they were doing a "good or very good job." The only exception was on advancing research and innovation.

This broad sense of being ripped off suggests that, even after the Trump administration, there will still be strong public support for reform.

Responses to McMahon's letter are due by December. How many universities respond and how substantively they respond, will be a good indicator of whether they intend to change – or whether they will bet the political winds will shift and they can avoid real reform.

This WORLD Opinions article originally appeared on the WORLD News Group website (wng.org) on August 20, 2026. Reprinted with permission. Copyright © 2026 WORLD News Group. All rights reserved.

J.K.Wall is a writer in Indianapolis where he has worked as a business journalist, Fortune 500 speechwriter, and corporate manager.

DOT Unveils AI-Enhanced Air Traffic 'Smart System' to Reduce Flight Delays

By Thérèse Boudreaux

(The Center Square) – The U.S. Department of Transportation has launched an AI-enhanced air traffic control system to cut flight delays, part of a $12.5 billion federal push to replace aging infrastructure, with gradual improvement expected by summer 2027.

The new system, funded by an investment from Congress in the "One Big Beautiful Bill," builds upon the Federal Aviation Administration's plan to modernize air traffic control infrastructure.

For decades, the FAA has only had the funding to simply sustain old and outdated infrastructure, rather than replacing and modernizing it. A 2024 risk assessment of all 138 air traffic control systems by the Government Accountability Office deemed 37% of systems "unsustainable" and 39% as "potentially unsustainable."

The Strategic Management of Airspace Routes and Trajectories (SMART) system monitors weather conditions, flight paths, and flight arrival and departure schedules in real time, replacing the current static charts that controllers must rely on.

DOT Secretary Sean Duffy assured reporters that the new system is "not outsourcing aviation to AI," but rather providing "predictive tools" to help controllers fix problems before they arise, preventing unnecessary ground stops and flight diversions.

"What we've thought through is, let's use the best technology possible, the best predictors possible, so humans can make the best decisions possible," Duffy said. "And when we make the best decisions possible, that means you have less delays and you have less cancelations, which means your experience in the airspace is way better."

The AI-enhanced system, FAA Administrator Bryan Bedford said, would free up controllers "to do what we really need them to do, which is focus on the safety, maintain safety of the system and traffic separation."

Bedford added that the FAA will immediately begin rolling out the weather programs at the three primary airports in the D.C. region – Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA), Baltimore Washington International Airport (BWI) and Dulles International Airport (IAD).

Duffy said air travelers can expect to see "gradual improvement" by summer of 2027.

Full deployment of the SMART system in airports across the country is set to be completed by the end of 2028 and will involve "upgrading telecommunications lines, installing new radios and radars, and transitioning to electronic flight strips," according to DOT.

Thérèse Boudreaux is a reporter covering the federal government for The Center Square. thecentersquare.com

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Inexcusable: 35 Years Later, Spotted Owl and Timber Industry Both Near Extinction



A fledgling northern spotted owl. (Photo by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)

By Jeff Eager
Oregon Roundup

I was about 8 years old when I learned, over lunch at the Burger King in Aberdeen, Washington, that my dad had been laid off from his job with a local logging company. It was the only job I remembered him having, and it was scary, not least because I did not understand what was happening. Unbeknownst to me then, the layoff was the starting gun for the rest of my childhood and adolescence, which would be defined by family moves in search of work, friends left behind, new schools and constant financial strain. Had I understood what was in store, I would have been much more scared.

The collapse of the Pacific Northwest timber economy, on which countless families like mine relied, began in the early- to mid-1980s. Foremost among the proximate causes was a seized-up national economy featuring mortgage interest rates between 12 and 18% between 1980 and 1982. People weren't building houses (in 1981, there were only 1.1 million housing starts nationally, the lowest in 35 years), so people didn't need lumber and didn't need people harvesting trees and turning them into lumber.

Between 1979 and 1982, forest sector employment in Oregon and Washington declined by about 39,000 jobs, or 27%, according to the U.S. Forest Service. A lot of that pain was felt in small towns like Aberdeen, where alternatives to timber jobs were few.

Depending on whom you ask, I ended up OK. But the early '80s collapse, driven largely by weak demand for forest products, would be the left jab setting up a nasty right haymaker to the jaw of the timber industry less than a decade later.

The decisive blow would come from the supply side, as first judges and then the president of the United States decided to hobble the rural economy of an entire region to save an owl we've now learned is "functionally extinct" despite the socioeconomic harm perpetrated in its name.

Enter the spotted owl

Spurred by litigation from environmental groups, including the Sierra Club, in June 1990, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the northern spotted owl as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, concluding that the continued loss of old-growth habitat threatened the bird's survival. At the time, federal timber harvests in Oregon and Washington were near historically high levels.

The listing did not itself shut down federal logging. The more immediate blow came from the courts.

In May 1991, U.S. District Judge William Dwyer ruled in Seattle Audubon Society v. Evans that the Forest Service had failed to maintain viable owl populations. Dwyer, observing "the northern spotted owl is now threatened with extinction," prohibited the Forest Service from auctioning or awarding additional timber sales in suitable spotted-owl habitat in Washington, Oregon and northern California until the agency adopted legally adequate standards and guidelines for protecting the owl.

Dwyer cited federal scientists in finding "the owl is imperiled over significant portions of its range because of continuing losses of habitat from logging and natural disturbances."

The federal restrictions continued to expand. In January 1992, the Fish and Wildlife Service designated approximately 6.9 million acres of federal land in Washington, Oregon and northern California as critical habitat for the spotted owl.

The effect on the federal timber supply was dramatic. According to the Forest Service, Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management harvests in the Northwest Forest Plan area fell by approximately 2.5 billion board feet between 1990 and 1994, from about 3.3 billion board feet to roughly 800 million.

Land managed by the Bureau of Land Management in western Oregon provide an even more striking example. The Government Accountability Office in 2005 reported that timber sales on those lands plunged from a peak of 1.583 billion board feet in 1986 to just 14 million board feet in 1994.

President Bill Clinton stepped in. In April 1993, just months after taking office, Clinton convened a forest conference in Portland and directed his administration to develop a plan intended to resolve the perceived conflict between timber production and protection of the spotted owl and other old-growth-dependent species.

The result was the Northwest Forest Plan, adopted by the Clinton administration in 1994. Covering nearly 25 million acres of federal land in western Oregon, Washington and northern California, the plan established a vast network of reserves and other restrictions intended to protect old-growth ecosystems and species associated with them, foremost the northern spotted owl. The administration projected federal timber production of

See Near Extinction, Page 14

Taxed Enough Already? Every Way Oregon Gets Money Out Of You



Credit:: magnific.com

By Nathan Chartrand

Oregon doesn't have a general retail sales tax. Yet. But that doesn't mean Oregonians don't pay taxes on particular transactions, products and activities – or a long list of fees and assessments.

We'll begin with Oregon's personal income tax and list out the many ways Oregonians pay government taxes and fees today.

Not all of these taxes and fees fund state government. Some fund local government operations. Together, the list shows the many ways that Oregonians fund government operations today.

• Personal income tax, including tax on wages, capital gains, qualifying business income, Oregon-source income of nonresidents and personal income-tax withholding
• Taxes on business/pass-through income
• Pass-Through Entity Elective Tax
• Estate tax
• Trust/fiduciary taxes
• Partnership minimum tax
• Corporate excise tax
• Corporate income tax
• Corporate Activity Tax (CAT)
• Insurance taxes and assessments
• Utility taxes and assessments
• Electric distribution taxes
• Oil and gas production taxes
• Forest Products Harvest tax
• Small Tract Forestland/ severance tax
• Heavy-equipment rental tax
• Vehicle privilege tax
• Vehicle use tax

Then there are payroll-related collections:
• Statewide Transit Tax
• Unemployment Insurance payroll taxes
• Paid Leave Oregon contributions
• Workers' compensation assessments
• TriMet employer payroll tax
• TriMet self-employment tax
• Lane Transit District employer payroll tax
• Lane Transit District self-employment tax
• Other employment-related assessments

Transportation Taxes & Fees:
• Gas tax
• Diesel/motor-fuel taxes
• Aviation fuel taxes
• Vehicle registration fees
• Additional vehicle/fuel-efficiency registration charges
• Vehicle title fees
• Driver-license fees
• Driver permits
• Motorcycle endorsement fees
• Commercial vehicle registration
• Truck registration fees
• Heavy-truck weight-mile tax
• Trip permits
• OReGO and other applicable road-use/per-mile charges
• Other DMV fees

Property Taxes

There are property taxes funding county, city, libraries and school districts. The property tax is in addition to the $69.5 billion flowing to Oregon state government.
• Residential property taxes
• Commercial property taxes
• Industrial property taxes
• Centrally assessed/utility property taxes
• Local option levies and bond taxes

Product-specific taxes

Unlike visible sales taxes, these taxes are built into the cost of the product.
• Cigarette tax
• Tobacco-products tax
• Oral nicotine tax
• Marijuana tax
• Psilocybin tax
• Beer taxes
• Wine taxes
• Cider taxes
• State liquor-system markup and revenue
• State lodging/hotel tax
• Petroleum fees
• E-911 assessment
• 988 crisis-service assessment

Cannabis & Alcohol Licensing and Regulatory Revenue

Marijuana and alcohol generate additional money through:
• Marijuana-business licensing fees
• Cannabis regulatory fees and penalties
• OLCC liquor licensing fees
• Other alcohol regulatory fees

Oregon Lottery and Gambling Revenue
• Powerball/Mega Millions
• Scratch tickets
• Video Slots
• Sports betting

License, Permit and other Fees

Here is a sampling of the licenses, permits and government fees charged each year:
• Contractor licensing
• Business registrations
• LLC and corporation filings
• Professional licenses
• Medical licenses
• Nursing licenses
• Pharmacy licenses
• Real-estate licenses
• Insurance licenses
• Electrical/plumbing licenses
• Engineering/architecture licenses
• Cosmetology licenses
• Securities fees
• Environmental permits
• Agricultural licenses
• Food licenses

See Taxed Enough, Page 14

Governor Nominee Drazan Touts Proposals to Slash Taxes, Lower Cost of Living in Oregon

By Shaanth Nanguneri
Oregon Capital Chronicle

Oregon Republican gubernatorial nominee Christine Drazan has made the case for her agenda to slash taxes, reduce regulations and make state government more accountable to taxpayers, offering some of the clearest details yet on how she plans to tackle the cost of living in the state.

The state senator from Canby made her August remarks in downtown Portland, a metropolitan area where she will need to win over some moderate and liberal voters to cut into Democratic incumbent Gov. Tina Kotek's margins. Drazan's campaign shared a seven-page plan, containing policy proposals such as the creation of a state office to identify budgetary savings and a first-day executive order that directs state agencies to identify practices that increase the cost of living for Oregonians.

Other policy plans listed, however, are less detailed, such as a call to "reform" taxes such as the corporate activity tax and the estate tax, which state lawmakers unsuccessfully at tempted to cut earlier this year.

"While Oregonians have tightened their budgets, state government has continued to grow, layering on new regulations, fees and mandates that make nearly everything more expensive," Drazan's plan reads. "As governor, Christine Drazan will put affordability at the center of every decision her administration makes."

The proposals align with some of the key priorities identified by Gov. Tina Kotek's prosperity council, which was charged last year with identifying policy recommendations for the governor to spur economic development in the state. For instance, the prosperity council suggested that Oregon work to replace and repeal Oregon's Climate Protection Program and make cuts to the estate tax and corporate activity tax.

Drazan's plan doesn't say exactly how those programs should change, but it calls for repealing the Climate Protection Program and reforming the estate and corporate activity tax. She said that she views the prosperity council as a "gimmick" by Kotek but that the advisers who served on the council "didn't look at it that way."

"They gave it their best efforts, and they came up with concepts and ideas that are not partisan in nature. They recognize what it's going to take to turn our economy around," she said. "I will take good ideas from everywhere and work with anybody across the aisle and across our state that wants to contribute to our work that it is going to take to strengthen and support our economy and help get Oregon moving in the right direction."

She is also calling for reinstated high school graduation requirements, reduced property taxes for seniors, a $200 million infrastructure fund for site readiness and a state of emergency for Oregon's addiction and mental health challenges. She said that private insurance premiums have become unaffordable, but that she believes Oregon's Medicaid program has been generous.

The Oregon Health Plan is one of the country's most expansive Medicaid programs, covering dental and vision care, providing extra benefits including grocery assistance for some users and insuring low-income Oregonians regardless of immigration status through Healthier Oregon.

"While health care isn't an issue that's come up a ton as I talk to Oregonians in this race, I know how expensive it is. I know how important it is, and Oregonians cannot afford to go without it," Drazan said. "But we cannot look at it like we can be all things to all people, and that's precisely what the Oregon Health Plan has been in the state of Oregon."

A spokesperson for the Kotek campaign framed the new proposal from Drazan as an effort to shift focus away from the federal administration.

"Drazan's plan is simply her latest effort to distract Oregonians from her history of being Donald Trump's stand-in," Federico Araujo, the campaign's director of communications, said in a statement. "Oregonians know that Drazan's record of pushing to roll back abortion rights, eliminate vote by mail and gut health care is too extreme for our state – and that's why they will reject her once again this November."

Shaanth Nanguneri is a reporter at the Oregon Capital Chronicle.
oregoncapitalchronicle.com

10 Oregon Races Worth Watching

By Richard Emmons

Democrats currently hold an 18–12 majority in the Oregon Senate and a 37–23 majority in the House. Oregon's Constitution requires a three-fifths vote for revenue-raising bills, 18 votes in the Senate and 36 in the House, so even a small number of seats changing parties can matter.

Here are 10 races that could affect the balance of power in Salem. These elections stand out because they involve open seats, historically close districts, party switches or Republican-held seats that Democrats could capture.

Oregon Senate

SENATE DISTRICT 3 — JACKSON COUNTY

Denise Krause (D) vs. Brad Hicks (R)

Democratic Sen. Jeff Golden's retirement leaves this Southern Oregon seat open. Golden's previous Senate contest was relatively close, making SD3 one of the more consequential open-seat contests outside the Portland area. See related story on page 17.

SENATE DISTRICT 20 — CLACKAMAS COUNTY

Sen. Mark Meek (D) vs. Michele Stroh (R)

SD20 has a recent history of extremely close elections. Republican Michele Stroh is challenging Democratic incumbent Mark Meek.

SENATE DISTRICT 10 — SALEM AREA

Sen. Deb Patterson (D) vs. Angela Plowhead (R)

Patterson is defending a Democrat-held Salem-area seat against Republican Angela Plowhead.

SENATE DISTRICT 11 — NORTH SALEM/KEIZER/WOODBURN

Virginia Stapleton (D) vs. Tracy Cramer (R)

Republicans are defending this open seat following Sen. Kim Thatcher's departure. Former Republican Rep. Tracy Cramer faces Democrat Virginia Stapleton.

SENATE DISTRICT 16 — NORTH COAST

Rachel Armitage (D) vs. Courtney Bangs (R)

Another Republican-held open seat, SD16 has an unusually balanced electorate. Nearly 40% of voters are nonaffiliated, compared with approximately 28% Democrats and 27% Republicans. The seat is currently held by Republican Sen. Suzanne Weber.

House of Representatives

HOUSE DISTRICT 32 — NORTH COAST

Rep. Cyrus Javadi (D) vs. Max Sherman (R)

Javadi won the seat as a Republican before switching to the Democratic Party in September 2025. A Sherman victory would return the seat to Republican control.

HOUSE DISTRICT 22 — WOODBURN AREA

Rep. Lesly Muñoz (D) vs. Noemi Legaspi (R)

Few Oregon House races were closer in 2024. Muñoz defeated Republican Tracy Cramer by just 161 votes, 10,480 to 10,319.

HOUSE DISTRICT 40 — OREGON CITY/GLADSTONE

Michael Sugar (D) vs. Adam Baker (R)

Democratic Rep. Annessa Hartman is leaving the legislature, making this an open seat. Baker previously came within 181 votes of winning HD40 in 2022.

HOUSE DISTRICT 7 — SPRINGFIELD

Kori Rodley (D) vs. Adam Wilson (R)

Democratic Rep. John Lively's retirement created an open seat. Nonaffiliated voters comprise about 42% of district registration, compared with roughly 32% Democrats and 23% Republicans.

HOUSE DISTRICT 51 — CLACKAMAS COUNTY

Rep. Matt Bunch (R) vs. Darla Mead (D)

This race matters because Republicans are defending rather than trying to gain a seat. Bunch was appointed after Christine Drazan moved to the Senate.

Richard Emmons is the Publisher and Editor of the Oregon Eagle.

Oregon's Congressional Reps Seek Reelection

By Eagle News Staff

All six Oregon incumbents are seeking reelection on Nov. 3. Five are Democrats; Cliff Bentz is the delegation's sole Republican.

District 1 — Northwest Oregon: Suzanne Bonamici vs. Barbara Kahl

Incumbent Suzanne Bonamici, Democrat, is seeking her eighth full term, following a partial term won in January 2012. A lawyer, she worked in consumer protection at the Federal Trade Commission and in private practice before serving in the Oregon House and Senate. She also carries the Working Families nomination.

Challenger Barbara Kahl, Republican, is a veterinarian whose earlier career included finance and purchasing work at Intel. She earned her veterinary degree through the Oregon State University–Washington State University program and later served as American Samoa's chief veterinarian.

District 2 — Eastern and Southern Oregon: Cliff Bentz vs. Chris Beck

Incumbent Cliff Bentz, Republican, is seeking a fourth term after first winning election in 2020. An Ontario attorney, farmer and rancher, he previously served in both chambers of the Oregon Legislature and on the Oregon Water Resources Commission. His background includes extensive work on water and natural-resource issues.

Challenger Chris Beck, Democrat, served in the Oregon House from 1997 to 2003 and later worked as a rural economic-development policy adviser at the U.S. Department of Agriculture during the Obama administration. Beck has made rural health care a central campaign issue and also carries the Independent Party nomination.

District 3 — Portland, Gresham and Hood River: Maxine Dexter vs. Loran Ayles

Incumbent Maxine Dexter, Democrat, is seeking a second term after winning election in 2024. A lung and critical-care physician, she practiced at Kaiser Permanente for more than 15 years. She previously served in the Oregon House of Representatives.

Challenger Loran Ayles, Republican, is a heavy-equipment operator from Hood River. His professional background includes work with the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 701.

District 4 — Southern Coast and Southern Willamette Valley: Val Hoyle vs. Monique DeSpain and Justin Filip

Incumbent Val Hoyle, Democrat, is seeking a third term, having first won in 2022. She previously served as Oregon labor commissioner and Oregon House majority leader. Before entering politics, she worked for 25 years in the bicycle industry. She also carries the Working Families nomination.

Monique DeSpain, Republican, is an attorney and retired Air Force colonel with 30 years of military service, including service as a military lawyer. The Eugene resident was also Hoyle's Republican opponent in 2024 and carries the Libertarian nomination.

Justin Filip, Pacific Green, also carries the Progressive nomination.

District 5 — Portland Suburbs to Central Oregon: Janelle Bynum vs. Patti Adair and Andrea Townsend

Incumbent Janelle Bynum, Democrat, is seeking a second term after winning in 2024. An electrical engineer and business owner, she served eight years in the Oregon House and chaired its Small Business and Economic Development Committee.

Patti Adair, Republican, has served as a Deschutes County commissioner since January 2019. Her background includes accounting, business consulting and horse-farm management. A University of Oregon graduate, she also carries the Libertarian nomination.

Andrea Townsend, Pacific Green, is a Portland artist, gardener and parent.

District 6 — Salem and the Western Willamette Valley: Andrea Salinas vs. David Russ

Incumbent Andrea Salinas, Democrat, is seeking a third term after winning the district's first election in 2022. She previously served in the Oregon House from 2017 to 2023, including as majority whip. She also carries the Independent Party nomination.

Challenger David Russ, Republican, served as Dundee's mayor from 2015 through 2024, following service on its city council. An accountant, consulting chief financial officer and real-estate broker, he brings a background in small-business ownership and corporate management.

Oregon Democratic Party Kicks Off Tour to Tie GOP's Drazan to Trump

By Shaanth Nanguneri
Oregon Capital Chronicle

The Democratic Party of Oregon last month kicked off a new "No Trump in Oregon" tour in the state's most populous city, doubling down on its efforts to tie Republican gubernatorial nominee Christine Drazan, a state senator from Canby, to the Trump administration.

The afternoon event took place a week after Labor Day in Southeast Portland at the Oregon Labor Federation. It marks the first stop in a tour that will also visit cities including Eugene, Bend and Salem.

"Now that she is running for statewide office, Drazan is playing a moderate, but the facts don't lie. She has spent her entire career in politics pushing policies that are in lockstep with Donald Trump and his MAGA agenda," said Nathan Soltz, chair of the Democratic Party of Oregon. "Oregonians deserve a leader that will push back on Trump's authoritarian overreach, who will stand up for them and stand with them."

The tour to some of Oregon's most heavily populated metropolitan areas also comes as some analysts have pulled away from forecasting a Kotek win in the Oregon governor's race. Although Kotek's campaign has about $5 million more in the bank, the Cook Political Report on Sept. 10 adjusted its forecast for the race from "Likely Democrat" to "Lean Democrat," noting that "Democrats admit that Gov. Tina Kotek's reelection bid is increasingly closer than they'd like."

Democrats framed their renewed push against Drazan as necessary prior to the Nov. 3 election. Graham Trainor, president of Oregon's American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, joined them to take aim at Drazan's legislative record on labor rights, such as her vote against a 2026 law that ensures Oregon will not adopt less stringent child labor standards if the federal government decides to lower them. AFL-CIO represents more than 300,000 Oregonians in nearly 300 affiliated unions.

"That's how far she'll go to avoid standing up to Donald Trump," Trainor told reporters. "At every opportunity, she's used her power as an elected official to try and weaken protections for Oregon workers. That is not the kind of leadership that Oregonians and Oregon workers deserve."

The Democratic Party of Oregon has long sought to tie Drazan to the federal administration, an approach Drazan has decried as a distraction from Kotek's record on issues such as homelessness, education and economic development. Kotek's backers said their focus on Trump was out of a need to educate the public on Drazan's record rather than avoiding discussions of Kotek's.

Rep. Travis Nelson, a Portland Democrat who took over Kotek's House seat

See Tour, Page 20

U.S. Senate Race: Jeff Merkley Faces Three Challengers

By Eagle News Staff

Oregon voters will choose a U.S. senator on Nov. 3, with Democratic incumbent Jeff Merkley facing Republican David Brock Smith, Libertarian Gary Lyndon Dye, and Chris Henry, nominated by both the Progressive and Pacific Green parties. The winner will serve a six-year term beginning in January 2027.

Incumbent Jeff Merkley, Democrat, is seeking a fourth term. First elected in 2008, when he defeated Republican incumbent Gordon Smith, Merkley won reelection in 2014 and 2020. Before entering the Senate, he served in the Oregon House, including as speaker. His earlier career included national-security policy work and leading Portland Area Habitat for Humanity, followed by additional nonprofit affordable-housing work.

Merkley also carries the Working Families nomination. His campaign emphasizes affordable housing and health care, climate policy, campaign-finance reform and restrictions on stock trading by elected officials. He also highlights his practice of holding a town hall in every Oregon county each year.

David Brock Smith, Republican, is a state senator and small-business owner from Port Orford. He served in the Oregon House from 2017 until moving to the state Senate in January 2023. Earlier public service included the Curry County Board of Commissioners, Port Orford City Council and Port Orford–Langlois School Board.

Brock Smith won the Republican nomination from a seven-candidate primary field. His campaign emphasizes affordability, public safety, jobs and government accountability.

Gary Lyndon Dye, Libertarian, is a Portland-born chemical engineer whose career includes work in oil refining and natural-gas measurement at Shell, Saudi Aramco and NW Natural. His stated priorities include individual liberty, smaller government and greater accountability in energy and utility operations.

Chris Henry, Progressive and Pacific Green, is a truck driver, former aircraft mechanic, union organizer and shop steward. Henry advocates Medicare for All, higher wages, stronger workplace protections, reduced military spending and campaign-finance reform. He also proposes federal funding to prepare Oregon for a major Cascadia earthquake.

Trump's Top 25 From Page 1



The 45th and 47th President of the United States, Donald J. Trump. Credit: The Rod Martin Report.

Trump launched an American industrial supercycle

5. He made the 2017 tax cuts permanent … and better.

The One Big Beautiful Bill locked in the largest tax cut in modern history, including the doubled standard deduction, the expanded Child Tax Credit and 100% expensing for factories and equipment. It also delivered No Tax on Tips, No Tax on Overtime, an abolition of most taxes on Social Security benefits and major relief for seniors.

Every Democrat voted no. With the 2017 act set to expire in December 2025, that would have resulted in the largest tax hike in American history.

6. He repealed 129 regulations for every new one.

In fiscal 2025, federal agencies finalized 646 deregulatory actions and just five regulatory actions: 129-to-1, and in nearly every case, the "one" was to repeal the others! OIRA says the savings exceeded those of Trump's entire first term. That is more freedom, lower costs and less bureaucratic sabotage.

Of these, the crown jewel was the repeal of Obama's 2009 "Endangerment Finding," the legal foundation for the Green New Scam's vehicle mandates. EPA calls it the largest deregulatory action in American history and estimates that by itself, it will save Americans more than $1.3 trillion. Trump also killed the federal EV mandate, restored Americans' freedom to buy the cars and trucks they actually want, and even eliminated the incentives behind the almost universally hated start-stop button.

7. He secured $18 trillion in announced investment commitments.

That's nearly two-thirds the size of the entire American economy, building American factories, chip plants, data centers, energy projects, steel mills, shipyards and supply chains employing American workers. Apple, Meta, NVIDIA, Micron, Hyundai, U.S. Steel, Ford, Taiwan Semiconductor, and many corporations and sovereign wealth funds are betting big on Trump's America. And it's just getting started.

8. He made "reshoring" and "reindustrialization" real, not a slogan.

Ford is moving Lincoln production out of China. Toyota is shifting Tacoma production from Mexico to Texas. GM, Honda, Mercedes-Benz, Stellantis and others are expanding U.S. production.

9. He replaced lopsided trade deals with balanced, reciprocal trade.

Trump used tariffs as leverage to reverse 80 years of lopsided trade deals that favored everyone but America, and to win new or improved agreements with trading partners accounting for more than half of global GDP. Those agreements open foreign markets, attack non-tariff barriers, defend strategic industries and make it more profitable to build in America than to export American jobs.

10. He shifted global energy dominance from the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of America.

Once the world's largest energy importer – "exporting" $700 billion a year to our enemies – America now outproduces Saudi Arabia and Russia combined. The U.S. is also setting new records in oil, natural gas and LNG exports, becoming the first country ever to export more than 100 million metric tons of LNG in a year.

11. After four decades of nuclear paralysis, Trump brought five new reactors online in a single year.

For more than 40 years, not one new privately developed non-light-water reactor reached criticality in America. Trump ordered at least three by July 4, 2026. DOE delivered four by the deadline, then a fifth just one month later.

Decades of zero. One Trump summer: five. That is a genuine nuclear renaissance.

Trump made elections matter again

12. He broke the Deep State's power to defy the elected branches.

In Trump v. Slaughter, the Supreme Court ruled for the first time in 90 years that Article II, Section 1, is still part of the Constitution: The president may fire subordinate officials in the executive branch, overturning the 1935 precedent that insulated "independent" agencies from voters' control.

Ever wonder why elections often seem to change nothing? How about one president and 5,000 political appointees vs. 2.8 million unfireable, unaccountable bureaucrats? THAT is the "Deep State."

Trump then made that victory real. For the first time in a century, all policy-making bureaucrats can now be fired for misconduct, incompetence, or defying lawful directives. The permanent bureaucracy no longer gets to veto the voters.

13. He ended nationwide injunction abuse.

In Trump v. CASA, the Supreme Court sharply limited nationwide injunctions. A single, local, district judge should not be able to block a national policy for everyone, everywhere; and yet that's exactly what they've done, nonstop, ever since Trump (and only Trump) took office in 2017. In restricting that unconstitutional power, the Court kneecapped the Black Robe Bureaucracy's favorite tool of unlawful judicial supremacy.

14. He shut down USAID as a left-wing slush fund and shadow government.

USAID had become a taxpayer-funded machine for exporting abortion, gender ideology, censorship and left-wing politics. It had a bigger budget than the CIA and the State Department combined, absolutely no accountability whatsoever and a penchant for overthrowing governments.

Trump terminated it – completely – and moved real humanitarian aid under the State Department.

15. He shrank federal employment to its lowest level in 60 years.

From a high under Biden, the federal workforce is now its smallest since 1966. Workforce reductions, agency closures and spending cancellations mean fewer bureaucrats paid to resist the voters.

16. He expelled DEI from the federal government.

Trump eliminated federal DEI offices and barred race- and sex-based preferences across the executive branch. Government hiring and contracting are returning to merit and equality under the law, ending the grotesque Democrat idea that "fighting discrimination" requires the federal government to discriminate.

He defended faith and family

17. Trump delivered sweeping pro-life reform.

In his first term, he delivered the judges that overturned the abominable Roe v. Wade. Hardly anyone believed it could be done, or that Trump would do it. But he did, and a half-century

See Trump's Top 25, Page 23

What in the World Is Wrong With Me?

By Ben Settle

So reads the headline of one of the most profitable direct mail ads in advertising history.

It was written by a brilliant copywriter (who also wrote ads for Rush Limbaugh) named Richard Armstrong. And that ad's headline and first page are a near-perfect "template" Oregon Republicans can use to win more elections, and that Oregon businesses can also use to make enough money to pay the withering taxes and fees Oregon Democrats will pass if they win.

Before showing how to use it, here's the direct mail piece's first page:

"What In The World
Is Wrong With Me?"

- **"I can't lose weight no matter how hard I try."**
- **"I feel sluggish all the time."**
- **"I'm so forgetful. I think I'm losing my mind."**
- **"I find myself craving food between meals."**
- **"I don't sleep as well as I used to."**
- **"I'm a happy person, but sometimes I feel so blue."**
- **"My vision is not as sharp as it used to be."**
- **"My mind feels so 'mushy' all the time."**

This ad "zeroes in" on symptoms everyone can relate to. People spend hours reading about their symptoms and how to fix them. It's like the old joke:

"He died doing what he loved: Looking up his symptoms on WebMd."

And here's how a politician or business owner can tap into this phenomenon:

1. Take the above headline and bullet points
2. Write a postcard, direct mail letter, email, or social media post (or adapt it to a video) with the same format – and then substitute the symptoms in the ad with what your market is experiencing.

For example, let's say Christine Drazan wants to use this in her political advertising. She could swap out the above ad's health symptoms with her voters' mental/emotional/financial symptoms, like this:

"Why In The World
Am I So Frustrated And Angry?"

- **"Dirty drug needles & human feces litter parks where my kids play"**
- **"Constant new taxes & fees stop me from catching up on retirement"**
- **"Red tape & regulations get me fined for breaking laws I don't even know exist"**
- **"Vote-by-mail & propaganda makes me ask what's the point of even voting?"**
- **"Teachers & bureaucrats want my son to put on a dress and my daughter to have abortions"**
- **"Tina & her cronies lie awake at night obsessing over ways to jail me for owning a gun"**
- **"Illegal aliens & criminals without car insurance drive my rates through the roof"**
- **"Rapists & murderers have more rights than I do"**

After that she could pitch voters to join her email list where she can send them even more reasons to vote for her instead of the crime boss socialist currently running Oregon into the ground.

However, let's face it.

There's about as much chance of Christine Drazan using this advice as Tina Kotek sporting a MAGA hat.

But if you're an Oregon business owner (who hasn't left the state yet), you can use the same template to sell your products and services just as easily, and just as successfully.

And you can do it just by changing the above ad's headline and the bulleted "symptoms" to reflect your customers' and clients' pains, fears, and frustrations (mental, emotional, and/or physical) your business can help them with.

Ben Settle is an Oregon Eagle co-owner in Gold Beach where he publishes ridiculously high-priced books & newsletters about online marketing, writes twisted horror novels & screenplays, and trades options & invests in companies he thinks are cool. Subscribe to his free email tips at BenSettle.com.



Did Trump's 'Big Beautiful Bill' Create Oregon's Health Care Crisis?

By Eagle News Staff

State Rep. Ed Diehl has pushed back on claims that H.R. 1 created Oregon's health care funding problems, saying Oregon was already facing rapidly rising costs, inadequate provider reimbursement and growing financial pressure throughout the Oregon Health Plan long before the new federal law.

"H.R. 1 will create real challenges for Oregon. But let's be honest about what was happening before H.R. 1 ever came along," Diehl said. "Oregon's health care system was already flashing red." The warning signs, he asserted, were there well before Congress acted.

Previously, Oregon hospitals were telling lawmakers that Medicaid reimbursement covered only about 56 cents for every dollar they spent providing Medicaid services. Meanwhile, labor, pharmaceutical, supply and other costs of delivering care continued to rise.

"We had a system where taxpayers were spending more and more while the doctors, hospitals and organizations actually delivering the care were saying they weren't being paid enough to cover their costs," Diehl said. "That's a fundamental structural problem, and it existed long before H.R. 1."

Rather than first addressing those underlying problems, Diehl points out, Oregon continued expanding the scope of taxpayer-funded health coverage.

Oregon created OHP Bridge in 2024, extending publicly funded coverage to adults earning between 138 and 200% of the federal poverty level. The Oregon Health Authority projected that approximately 35,000 people who already had private Marketplace insurance would transition onto the publicly funded Bridge program.

"That wasn't simply providing insurance to people who had no coverage," Diehl said. "Oregon deliberately moved tens of thousands of people from private insurance onto a taxpayer-funded program while the existing Medicaid delivery system was already under tremendous financial pressure."

Oregon also expanded Healthier Oregon, providing full Oregon Health Plan benefits to qualifying residents regardless of immigration status. Because federal Medicaid dollars generally cannot be used to cover people without qualifying immigration status, much of that additional commitment falls directly on Oregon taxpayers.

"These weren't federal mandates," Diehl said. "They were choices made in Salem. You cannot continually expand the government's health care obligations and then act surprised when the bill comes due."

At the same time Oregon expanded publicly funded coverage, state policymakers imposed additional requirements affecting how health care can be delivered.

Oregon enacted statutory hospital staffing requirements, including nurse-to-patient ratios. The state expanded hospital financial-assistance requirements. And Oregon maintains regulatory barriers governing investment, expansion and restructuring in its health care market.

Oregon's Certificate of Need program requires state approval before certain new hospitals, skilled-nursing facilities and other covered health care capacity can enter or expand in the market. Applicants must demonstrate to the state that the proposed capacity is needed.

Oregon has also added the Health Care Market Oversight program, giving the state authority to review qualifying mergers, acquisitions and affiliations among health care organizations.

"Think about the contradiction," Diehl said. "We're told Oregon doesn't have enough providers, enough beds or enough access to care, while state government regulates staffing, dictates when certain new capacity is allowed to enter the market, and adds additional regulatory hurdles to investment and restructuring."

Diehl continued, "Every one of these policies can be debated on its merits. But they aren't free, and we shouldn't pretend they have nothing to do with the cost and availability of health care in Oregon."

Summarized Diehl:

"H.R. 1 did not create Oregon's provider reimbursement problem.

"It did not create the financial problems facing Oregon's CCOs.

"It did not create OHP Bridge.

"It did not create Healthier Oregon.

"It did not enact Oregon's hospital staffing mandates, Certificate of Need requirements, charity-care policies or Health Care Market Oversight program.

"Those were Oregon policy decisions.

"H.R. 1 changed the rules. It didn't create the underlying problem. What it did was expose how financially fragile Oregon's health care system had already become."

Oregon is not the only Medicaid-expansion state subject to the new federal requirements.

Nebraska also expanded Medicaid and is subject to H.R. 1. Yet Nebraska became the first state in the nation to implement the new Medicaid work requirements, beginning May 1 – eight months ahead of the federal deadline – integrating the requirements into its existing eligibility and renewal system.

"If H.R. 1 alone explains Oregon's crisis, then we should expect other Medicaid-expansion states operating under the same federal law to face the same crisis," Diehl said. "Nebraska's experience gives us good reason to ask a different question: What did Oregon do differently?"

Diehl said Oregon should use the federal changes as an opportunity to confront the problems that existed before H.R. 1 – including inadequate provider reimbursement, rapidly growing public health care expenditures, regulatory costs and barriers to new health care capacity, and continued expansion of taxpayer-funded coverage.

"We absolutely should protect a strong safety net for Oregonians who truly depend on it," Diehl noted. "But a sustainable safety net requires discipline. We can't continually expand who and what taxpayers are expected to cover, make care more expensive to deliver, restrict new capacity, underpay the providers actually delivering the care and then blame Washington when the numbers don't work.

"Oregon's health care crisis was already here. H.R. 1 didn't create it. If we're serious about fixing it, Salem needs to start taking responsibility for the decisions Salem made."

Oregon Needs a Serious Debate About Data Centers, Not Attack Ads

By Mark Hester
Oregon Roundup

Perhaps no issue better reflects the state of politics today than data centers.

In Oregon, both candidates for governor have ads attacking their opponent for supporting data centers. The ads are more accurate than most because both candidates have supported data center construction in at least some cases. However, neither wants to acknowledge that support now that public opinion has turned against data centers. In fact, both candidates now say they want a moratorium on building data centers.

No matter what you think about data centers, both candidates deserve demerits for the way they have handled the issue. A good leader would either acknowledge she has changed her views and explain why or stick to her previous support and explain why. If neither candidate can articulate a strong position on data centers, there's no reason to think she can turn around the economy or develop a coherent state regulatory environment for artificial intelligence.

Before going any further, it's important to acknowledge that Tina Kotek and Christine Drazan are far from alone in choosing to try to score political points off public fears about data centers rather than lead.

According to the Data Center Moratorium tracker, 18 states (including Oregon) have active bans or moratoriums (in Oregon's case, Kotek's recently announced pause on data center development on state land) on data centers, another eight have legislation moving forward, and 16 are discussing possible restrictions. That leaves only eight states, four of which have embraced data centers with the other four so far ignoring the issue. Those who haven't taken a position included Hawaii and Alaska, which are too remote and expensive to attract much attention from AI companies, and Rhode Island, which is too small to be a priority.

Any politician, including the two Oregon gubernatorial candidates, who wants to lead on this issue should embrace these principles, some of which are in tension with each other:

1. Remaining a leader in artificial intelligence is important to both the U.S. economy and national defense, and data centers are necessary to develop artificial intelligence.
2. Consumer concerns about data centers' effects on electricity prices, water supply and livability in nearby areas are valid.
3. Construction of data centers delivers an economic boost, but once completed data centers deliver relatively few direct jobs to the communities where they are located.
4. For these reasons, new data centers should not be subsidized with taxpayer money and should be located on land that does not have more productive economic uses. (Putting data centers on buildable land within the Portland metro growth boundary never was a good idea.)
5. Any data center policy should be part of broader policy on artificial intelligence.

In short, if the candidates want to make data centers a campaign issue, that's a good idea. Not only is it an important issue that voters care about, but it also provides a good test of the candidates' ability to develop policy proposals on controversial issues. Unfortunately, that's not what's happening. Instead, we are getting attack ads and moratorium pledges from both incumbent Democrat Kotek and Republican challenger Drazan. That's the opposite of a constructive policy discussion.

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Debate From Page 1

Kotek's response pointed to bills passed to establish performance standards and her executive orders to reduce chronic absenteeism, not reduce instructional time and to ban cellphones in public schools. She finished her answer by saying, "If we're going to be serious about education, we have to focus on the basics and be committed to holding our districts accountable."

Reporter Nigel Jaquiss asked, "Governor, I don't believe you've answered the question. More money, worse results. Why?"

Kotek then said, "Well, I'm not satisfied either. When we are about middle of the pack in funding and our outcomes aren't there, that is why I've fought since day one to do things like investing in early literacy. ... We are seeing improvements. We have more work to do, and we want to stay the course on the things that are working."

Drazan answered the question with, "Well, I can answer the question why. It's because of Governor Tina Kotek. She voted to remove graduation standards. She kept our schools shut down for longer than anywhere else in the nation. As she has advanced politics inside the classroom, she hasn't kept teachers safe inside the classroom. The issues that we face in our schools right now can be laid at the feet of the sitting governor. There's no other way around it. She happens to be the superintendent of public instruction, and I would say, given the test results that just came out, nothing is working. I'm a mom of three. I have spent my fair share in the classroom, and I'm grateful for fantastic teachers that help my kids get through tough times academically. But today, those teachers are also being left behind. We have got to focus on our kids. We've got to focus on academic outcomes. More money is not solving this problem. It's going to take a focus on third-grade reading. We're going to have to restore graduation requirements, and we need to get serious about absolutely focusing entirely on academics rather than political agendas."

Housing supply

The next question was about increasing the housing supply in Oregon.

Drazan answered, "I absolutely



believe that we must tackle questions around availability of land to build on. We can protect high valley farmland, forest land and maintain Oregon's commitment to our environment while not constricting the availability of housing. We have got to advance permits and ensure that permitting is expedited. We have got to lower the cost of system development charges. I talk to builders all the time that tell me that the price of building the home sometimes is equivalent to the price of getting through the government bureaucracy to begin to build the home."

Kotek answered, "We are producing more homes in our state because of the work that we have been doing here to streamline permitting, reducing red tape, investing in infrastructure, helping our communities plan better to have the housing that they need. The first six months of last year to the first six months of this year, Oregon is up 11.5% in its housing starts."

Drazan said in response, "This was Tina Kotek's number one agenda item when she ran for governor four years ago. It has been an abysmal failure. We have almost 10-year record lows in housing production. We see multifamily in downtown Portland that took a complete nosedive after she enforced inclusionary zoning and rent control in the city. ... This has been a government takeover of housing that has not actually worked with the private sector to develop more housing. It has just added more bureaucracy."

Wildfire and climate change

The candidates were asked, "Wildfires burned a record 2.5 million acres this year. What steps would you take to reduce future fire damage?"

Kotek responded, "I have fought for permanent funding for wildfire defense in our state, which, by the way, was a bill that Christine Drazan didn't even bother to show up to work to vote for because it was going to provide dedicated funding to help us fight wildfires. ... We are in drought. We are in climate change, and I believe that we have to deal with it and be resilient. Unlike my opponent, who does not believe in climate change,"

Drazan answered, "The comments from the governor tonight are approaching absurd. I absolutely believe that man-made climate change has an impact on us, and it is absurd for her to assert otherwise. It doesn't mean that I want to raise taxes to address it. Her only solution to any challenge is to raise taxes, and that is her only solution related to climate as well. We haven't even started talking about the climate protection plan that she's put in place that would actually raise costs at the fuel pump by $1.10."

Prosperity Council and tax structure

Kotek was asked, "Your Prosperity Council called Oregon's tax structure a big obstacle to growth. Does it serve the state well, and if not, how would you change it?"



Kotek answered, "The Prosperity Council recommendations were about how can we be as a state more competitive to grow our homegrown businesses as well as attract new businesses. There was a lot of conversation about taxes. What I have said is, our tax system needs to be adequate and pay for the things we need: our schools, our health care, our prisons. If there are ways that we can adjust our tax system to help us be more competitive, like adjusting our research and development credit, then we should do that. But we should do it cautiously because we are facing a budget deficit because of what President Trump is doing to our Medicaid program, the Oregon Health Plan. So we're going to have to be sure that whatever changes are made can help us be more competitive but does not blow a hole in our state budget."

Drazan answered, "As governor, I will be our state's chief prosperity officer. I will let everybody know Oregon is open for business. We need jobs. We have lost 25,000 jobs in a year. We have lost about 10,000 manufacturing jobs. We continue to get reports one after another talking about jobs that are leaving our state and going to states that are more competitive. The Prosperity Council laid out a roadmap, which the governor should have immediately embraced, and she should have taken immediate action to implement the portions of that that she could today as governor. She doesn't need to be re-elected governor. She's the sitting governor. She should take action now to implement those policies.

"Oregon's economy is in a free fall. We have got to recognize if we want stable families, if we want stable public funding for public services for our most vulnerable. We need jobs in our state, and that only begins when we begin to turn around our reputation, address taxation, and address regulation. And the Prosperity Council gave us a clear pathway for much of that."

In her rebuttal, Kotek said, "The Prosperity Council's recommendations are already underway. I'm preparing legislation for next year. That is what I can do right now. My agencies are already working on fast-track permitting because of a bill that I passed this year to make sure we can move faster and provide more certainty for large investments to build more jobs here in our state. And so I am working hard. We have new job openings that are coming in the life sciences sector that my opponent just seems to ignore, as if nothing is happening. I'm not going to trash our state. I'm going to build on our assets. I'm going to build on our people's talent, and we're going to make sure that we are open for business so we can grow here for the next decade."

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Oregon Lawmakers Seek to Open Up Affordable-Housing Records Now Kept Secret

By Rob Davis
ProPublica

Two Oregon lawmakers want to end an unusual exemption in the state's records law that has kept the public from learning how hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer money is spent on subsidized housing – and the effort has already landed key industry support.

Rep. Pam Marsh, chair of Oregon's House Committee on Housing and Homelessness, told ProPublica that she plans to introduce legislation next year to eliminate a law that shields key details of state spending on low-income housing.

The Southern Oregon Democrat said she didn't realize the documents were being kept secret until reading about it in a ProPublica story. [Link: myeagle.us/housingcost] She said previous leaders of her committee told her they were also unaware.

"I think this is an issue that will have very broad interest," Marsh said.

State Sen. Khanh Pham, a Portland Democrat and chair of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development, said she also wants the Legislature to tackle the issue in its next session.

Meanwhile, a lobbying group for low-income housing developers, lenders and related businesses, Housing Oregon, said it strongly supports repealing the secrecy provision; the organization has asked the state to disclose more about projects that it funds in the meantime.

"Oregon's affordable-housing providers share the public's interest in ensuring that public investments in housing are used effectively, responsibly and with visibility," said Kevin Cronin, a spokesperson for the group. "The questions raised in your recent ProPublica article regarding development costs deserve serious attention."

Cronin said Oregon can increase transparency around development costs

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Taxed Enough From Page 9

• Inspections
• Certifications
• Court filing fees
• Public-record fees
• Birth/death/marriage records
• Background checks
• Fingerprinting
• State laboratory fees
• Application and processing fees

Then natural-resource and recreation revenue:

• Hunting licenses
• Fishing licenses
• Hunting/fishing tags
• Commercial fishing fees
• Wildlife permits
• Timber sales
• Mineral/resource leases
• Water permits
• Air-quality permits
• Environmental fees
• Waste/disposal fees
• Hazardous-substance fees
• Petroleum load fees
• State park fees
• Campground fees
• Boat registrations
• ATV permits
• Other recreation permits

Fines & Penalties:

• Traffic fines
• Criminal fines
• Civil penalties
• Regulatory penalties
• Tax penalties and interest
• Court assessments
• Government recoveries

Healthcare revenue, assessments and recoveries:

There is healthcare-related funding:

• Healthcare-provider taxes/assessments
• Hospital assessments
• Insurance-related assessments
• Pharmaceutical rebates
• Medicaid recoveries

Federal Funding

People often leave out an enormous source of state funding. Oregon's state budget receives billions of federal tax dollars through:

• Medicaid for Oregon Health Plan
• Federal transportation and highway funding, financed in part by federal fuel and other highway-user taxes
• Education grants
• Special education
• SNAP-related funding
• TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.)
• Housing programs
• Public health
• FEMA/disaster relief
• Wildfire programs
• Environmental programs
• Child welfare
• Workforce programs
• Agriculture
• Energy
• Broadband/infrastructure
• Law enforcement
• Homeland security
• Federal grants and reimbursements

Yes, federal money counts when we're talking about the total resources supporting government spending. It isn't "free money." It ultimately comes from taxpayers around the country and federal borrowing.

Oregon State Budget

Let's take a look at the cost of Oregon state government. This excludes the cost of local government which is paid for by local taxes and fees.

Oregon's adopted 2025–27 state budget is $139 BILLION over two years. This works out to about $69.5 billion per year in authorized spending across General Fund, Lottery Funds, Other Funds and Federal Funds.

Now here's a number that should get people's attention:

There were 2,239,500 Oregon personal income-tax returns filed for 2024.

$69.5 billion divided by 2,239,500 tax returns equals $31,011 per tax return per year.

That's approximately $2,584 per month or $596 per week or $85 every single day of the year.

And that's an average allocation of total state-government spending per income-tax return – not a claim that every filer personally writes Oregon a $31,011 check.

Some taxpayers have little or no state income-tax liability. Some receive refunds. Some households file jointly. Businesses pay substantial portions of these revenues. Federal funds come from the national tax and borrowing system. Fees are paid disproportionately by the people and businesses using particular services.

So the tax burden isn't remotely distributed evenly.

What are we getting for our money?

Which raises the question I think Oregonians should be asking:

With nearly $70 billion a year flowing through the state budget, are we getting $70 billion worth of results?

Are our roads dramatically better?
Are our schools thriving?
Is housing more affordable?
Is homelessness declining?
Is public safety improving?
Is permitting easier?
Is infrastructure keeping up?

Are businesses finding Oregon easier to operate in?

The argument shouldn't simply be "Oregon needs more money."

Before politicians ask taxpayers for another dollar, we should be able to clearly see where the money we already have is going and what measurable results we're getting for it.

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Near Extinction From Page 9

roughly 1 billion board feet annually under its selected approach – a fraction of the several billion board feet per year federal lands had produced.

Actual harvests never came close to meeting the dramatically reduced projections of the Northwest Forest Plan as environmental groups and compliant federal judges continued to block timber sales. The Forest Service's first-decade monitoring found that from 1995–2003, federal agencies sold only 54% of the timber the Clinton-driven plan had projected.

To save the owl, environmental groups, federal judges and the Clinton administration forced drastic harvest reductions. With less timber to cut and process, job losses continued, mills closed, and communities like Aberdeen spiraled.

Despite the restrictions and the jobs losses, a new study reveals, the northern spotted owl has continued its decline and is closer than ever to extinction.

The study, published in Ecological Applications, the journal of the Ecological Society of America, describes an experiment conducted by researchers in Washington, Oregon and northern California in 2023 that used thousands of listening stations posted in forests and an artificial intelligence model identifying the calls of northern spotted owls.

The results showed spotted owls were "functionally extinct" in the northern portions of the studied area (Washington and much of Oregon). The researchers defined populations as approaching functional extinction when the probability that suitable areas were occupied by a breeding pair fell to 20% or less – a level associated with a high risk of demographic collapse. On the Oregon Coast, estimated pair occupancy was below 5%.

The authors of the study, led by Damon Lesmeister, a U.S. Forest Service wildlife biologist with courtesy faculty privileges at Oregon State University, described the Northwest Forest Plan's logging restrictions and found they have not, in fact, saved the northern spotted owl:

"Despite these conservation measures on federally managed forests, population recovery has not occurred for several avian species associated with structurally complex old forest, suggesting additional mechanisms are drivers of contemporary population trends. Northern spotted owl populations continue to decline faster than expected if habitat loss alone were driving population change, and by 2020 were found to warrant uplisting to endangered status." (Internal citations omitted.)

Lesmeister et al. say the culprit is the barred owl, a larger, more aggressive and adaptable genetic cousin of the northern spotted owl that originated in eastern North America and came to dominate much of the presumed former territory of the northern spotted owl by the late 20th century. Barred owls out-compete the northern spotted owl when they share habitat, and the study found far more barred owl calls than northern spotted owl calls, particularly in the northern areas of the study where spotted owls are approaching extinction.

"[Northern spotted owl] population declines are likely driven primarily through competition with invasive barred owls (S. varia), with continuing habitat loss (e.g., timber harvest, wildfire), legacy effects from historical logging, and altered disturbance regimes also contributing." (Internal citation omitted.)

The term "natural disturbance regimes" describes natural phenomena that shape forests, including wildfire, drought, insect outbreaks, disease and severe storms.

A regional, multi-generational scandal

The clearcutting of timber jobs and the evisceration of the economy that sustained families and towns throughout the Pacific Northwest did not save the northern spotted owl. That timid, reclusive and apparently fragile bird has continued its march toward extinction despite the enormous pain and societal upheaval inflicted by the federal government in its name.

This is maddening. It is inexcusable. It is a scandal of regional and multi-generational effect. Those who claimed they knew what they did not know about how to save the spotted owl are mostly gone, now. Towns like Aberdeen, Coos Bay and Klamath Falls are mired in perpetual economic and social depression imposed on taxpayers by the government they help fund.

Government is a blunt instrument often wielded to achieve specific results. When its policies do things policymakers did not intend, we call those things unintended consequences. In the case of logging restrictions to save the northern spotted owl, the policies missed the mark entirely, leaving an owl more imperiled than ever and a smoking crater of collateral damage visible from the Aberdeen Burger King.

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Oregon Students' Grasp of Key Subjects Slowly Grows, but Still Below Pre-Pandemic Levels

By Alex Baumhardt
Oregon Capital Chronicle

Oregon students continued to make small gains in key subjects over the last year but still haven't returned to pre-pandemic levels.

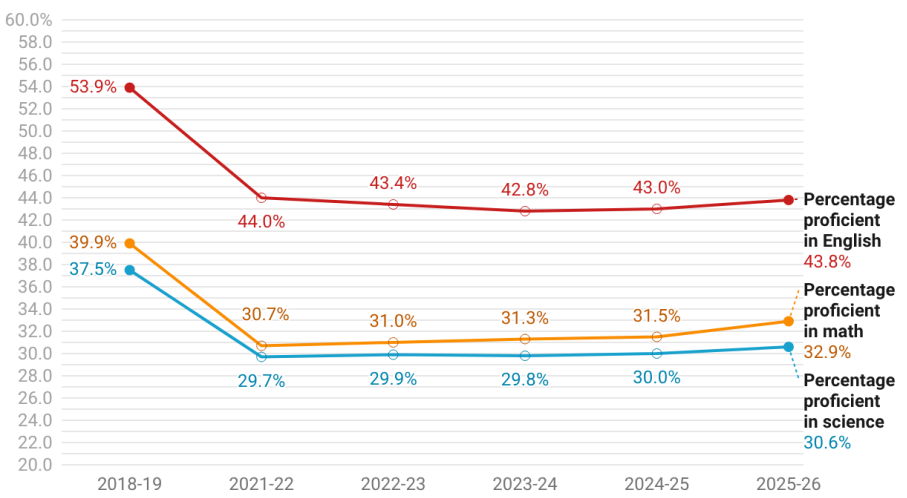
They're also not keeping pace with many of their peers nationwide when it comes to reading and writing.

The latest results from statewide assessment tests in English language arts, math and science show that across subjects, grades and districts, students tested at the end of the last school year were still about 8 percentage points behind pre-pandemic achievement levels. Overall proficiency in key subjects grew by less than 1 percentage point on average from the previous school year.

Less than half of all Oregon students tested are proficient readers, about one-third are proficient in math and less than one-third are proficient in science, according to the state tests, a stubborn trend that has persisted in math and science since before the pandemic and worsened in English language arts since the pandemic. Proficiency for elementary students means they are reading and doing math at or above grade-level standards. For 11th graders, proficiency also indicates college-readiness.

But ongoing declines in the five years since students returned to schools following pandemic closures have begun to turn into small rebounds in the last two years.

Percentage of all Oregon students proficient in key subjects before and since pandemic



**data unavailable for the 2020-21 school year due to pandemic*

Chart: Alex Baumhardt/Oregon Capital Chronicle • Source: Oregon Department of Education • Created with Datawrapper

In the state's 10 largest districts – responsible for educating about 40% of Oregon's 540,000 students – students have made small gains in most subjects, but most are still on average looking at double-digit percentage point gaps from pre-pandemic proficiency levels.

"We are focused on steady, sustained gains that build over time. And while this year's results may not feel transformational on their own, sustained improvement year after year can fundamentally change outcomes and the trajectory for our scholars," said Charlene Williams, director of the Oregon Department of Education, at a news conference.

Small gains in big districts

The small gains made in Oregon's largest districts mean those students are, on average, testing at proficiency levels above the state's overall averages, which inched up by less than a percentage point since last year across all subjects.

The biggest success among the large districts is Portland Public Schools, where students have on average come within a few percentage points of pre-pandemic levels in English language arts, math and science.

Other big districts, such as Salem-Keizer, have seen gains from literacy investments in certain grades.

Salem-Keizer's third-graders had their second year of improvements in reading and the largest since the pandemic, outpacing the statewide average.

"Last year, we said we had bent the curve, reversing a pattern of loss to one of gain. This year, we are expanding on that pattern with districtwide gains and state-leading gains in third-grade ELA," said Salem-Keizer Superintendent Andrea Castañeda in a news release. "Third-grade reading accelerated, math improved in every tested grade, and every school posted a gain in ELA or math. I can't imagine more affirming news for our hardworking students and staff."

Angelica Cruz, director of literacy at the Oregon Department of Education, said there are clear signs of improvement in reading across most grade levels. Third graders who took the assessment tests last year were in first grade when the first round of more than $90 million Early Literacy Success Initiative dollars were released to schools.

Those students have benefited from at least two solid years of literacy-focused support and investments, according to Cruz.

"While long-term impacts will take time to fully emerge, these results represent encouraging early signs that the state's literacy initiatives are moving achievement in the right direction," she said.

The annual assessment tests, called Smarter Balanced tests or the Oregon Statewide Assessment System tests, are given in the spring to grades three through eight and 11th grade students.

The tests are required by state and federal law, though Oregon allows parents to opt their children out of testing, according to the state education department. Prior to the pandemic, participation in the tests was closer to 95% while this year it was about 88% on average across all grades and subjects. Students were not required to take the tests in 2020 and the state education department scaled back testing in 2021.

This year saw marginally higher numbers of students participating in the tests, but the percentage of high schoolers taking the tests is still below 80%, making their assessment data difficult to interpret effectively, according to state education officials.

Oregon's slow marginal growth in recent years reflects a nationwide trend showing student learning was negatively affected by the pandemic, which included more than a year of online classes. Students nationwide are, however, making "sizable improvements" in reading according to recent data assessed by NWEA, the Portland-based nonprofit that administers assessments similar to the Smarter Balanced or Oregon system tests called MAP tests.

Alex Baumhardt is the senior reporter for the Oregon Capital Chronicle. oregoncapitalchronicle.com

Citizen to Portland City Council: 'Our House Is on Fire and We're Picking Out Curtains'

By David Dysert

Editor's Note: The following public comments were made at the Sept. 9, 2026, Portland City Council meeting.

Good morning. My name is David Dysart.

I've lived in the downtown area for nearly 20 years and in Portland on both sides of the river for the better part of 37 years.

Portland's grown significantly during that time, but the city's leadership has failed to address many of the challenges and crises that followed.

We're living with the consequences of small thinking, naive assumptions and bureaucratic finger pointing.

We can't solve our big problems if we care more about process than outcomes.

Too often we've made the perfect the enemy of the good, like being surprised 200 people couldn't agree on the perfect sobering center, so they just gave up. But at least every conceivable interest group got a voice in doing nothing.

And too often we're more focused on virtue signaling to our tribes than helping the most vulnerable among us, more concerned about ideology than individuals in need.

Our downtown and adjacent neighborhoods are at the center of these challenges. They bear the brunt of them. Downtown isn't just another neighborhood. It's our heart. And it's on life support.

Portlanders have lost confidence in this council. Taking up ideologically driven agendas from special interests sends a message. You're not focused on the critical challenges we face.

Perception is reality in politics, and you're squandering the precious bandwidth you have to win hearts and minds.

We need to care more about who's on our streets than who is in the White House. Trips to Europe for social housing ideas, banning niche food and renaming already renamed streets. Our house is on fire and we're picking out curtains.

If you're not focused on economic development, people in crisis on our streets and public safety, you're not meeting the moment. Your inaction is doing the talking. We're hemorrhaging our tax base, driving out the very people and businesses we need to fund basic services.

It used to be a no brainer to be in Portland. Now it's a challenged choice.

It's vital we attract more investment and visitors downtown, but we are either unwilling or unable to meaningfully address the human crisis on our streets. Name one entrance to downtown where visitors don't either immediately or within short distance confront a humanitarian crisis.

We declared a state of emergency on the houseless 20 years ago.

Can we blame folks for thinking we have no idea how to run a city?

Why in 2026 are the same first four blocks that folks encounter from the Burnside Bridge into downtown a dystopian nightmare? Over 40,000 trips go across that bridge every day.

When people see this chaos, they perceive the city is in crisis and unable to deal with its challenges, leading many to avoid downtown and for some, Portland altogether. That's not keeping Portland weird, it's keeping Portland broke.

Thank you for your time. Good day.

David Dysert has lived and worked in downtown Portland for decades.



‘Housing First’: What It Measures and What It Doesn’t

By William Kronert

With Oregon having the second-highest rate of homelessness and with drug and alcohol addiction being significant issues in the Grants Pass area, it is worth taking a closer look at the differences between the “Housing First” and “Treatment First” models. The information below is intended to provide a fair and factual overview of both approaches, particularly for people who may not be familiar with how these models work or how they differ.

Under the Housing First model, “success” is defined primarily through a public health and system-utilization lens, not through an addiction-recovery or social-reintegration lens. The model’s core assumption is that housing is a prerequisite for stability, and therefore housing is provided without requiring sobriety, treatment participation, or behavioral change.

Housing First programs are typically evaluated using three main metrics:

• **Housing Retention Rates –** Most studies show that 80–85% of participants remain housed over multiple years, regardless of whether they continue using substances or engage in treatment.

• **Reduction in Unsheltered Homelessness –** The model rapidly moves high needs individuals off sidewalks, out of encampments and into permanent housing units.

• **Cost Offsets to Crisis Systems –** Programs often report fewer emergency room visits, ambulance transports, psychiatric holds and jail stays among participants.

These metrics reflect the model’s emphasis on stabilization and survival, not rehabilitation.

When Housing First is evaluated against traditional standards of addiction recovery, mental-health improvement and social reintegration, its limitations become clear:

• **Sobriety Is Not Required –** Housing First intentionally separates housing from treatment. A person can remain housed while in active addiction indefinitely. As a result, the model does not measure success by whether someone becomes sober or reduces substance use. Fewer than 5% to 10% of Housing First participants achieve complete, sustained abstinence from drugs or alcohol over 2-to-5-year follow-up periods.

• **Long Term Dependency Is a Risk –** Because the model prioritizes permanent supportive housing over transitional recovery housing, many participants remain in taxpayer funded units for years without progressing toward employment or independent living. Critics argue this can create a form of long term system reliance, dependency.

• **Survival Is Treated as the Endpoint –** Housing First focuses on keeping people alive, sheltered and out of crisis systems. While these are important goals, they are not the same as recovery. Stabilization becomes the final metric rather than the starting point for rehabilitation.

In practice, this means the bar for “success” is set at maintaining a roof and reducing emergency utilization, not achieving sobriety, mental-health recovery, or reintegration into community life.

The critique is not that Housing First fails at what it tries to do – it succeeds at housing stability and crisis-system reduction. The critique is that it does not attempt the outcomes many communities actually care about:

• reducing addiction
• improving mental health
• restoring functional independence
• helping people return to work
• reintegrating individuals into society

Because these outcomes are not required, not measured and not incentivized, Housing First cannot be evaluated as a recovery model and often performs poorly when judged by recovery standards.

Treatment-First or “recovery-oriented” programs take the opposite approach: Sobriety, treatment participation and behavioral change are prerequisites for housing. These programs generally show:

• stronger outcomes in addiction recovery
• clearer progress toward employment and independence
• higher expectations for personal stabilization before long term housing

They also have lower housing retention, which is why the two models produce very different data profiles.

Housing First is effective at housing stability and reducing crisis-system use, but it does not prioritize or measure addiction recovery, mental-health improvement, or reintegration into society. Its definition of success is fundamentally different from recovery-based models, which is why debates about its effectiveness often hinge on what outcomes a community values most.

William Kronert, who lives in Grants Pass, Oregon, writes on matters of public interest at A Voice Within. avoicewithin.org

Rep. Yunker Calls for Answers on Oregon’s Single-Payer Health Care Plan

By Eagle News Staff

On Sept. 29, state Rep. Dwayne Yunker, R-Grants Pass, sent an oversight letter to the Universal Health Plan Governance Board seeking answers after the board missed the statutory deadline for presenting its plan for a single-payer health care system to the Oregon Legislature and governor. State law specifically required the plan to be submitted no later than Sept. 15, 2026.

“My concern is that most Oregonians have no idea how far this proposal has already progressed,” Yunker said in announcing his letter. “Oregon is developing a government-run single-payer health care system that could more than double state income taxes. A proposal of this magnitude deserves full public scrutiny before the legislature is asked to consider moving forward with it.”

Yunker continued: “We are potentially talking about one of the largest changes to health care and taxation Oregon has ever considered. The board’s preliminary financing proposal includes an additional 10.1% personal income contribution on affected income, along with a substantial employer payroll tax. Oregonians deserve to know what this could cost, how it would work and what happens to the health coverage they have today.”

“When the legislature puts a deadline into law, a state board should not simply substitute a different date without explaining why,” said Yunker. “This proposal could fundamentally change how health care is financed and administered in Oregon. The

See Health Care Plan, Page 17

Debate From Page 13

Closing statements

In her closing statement, Kotek remarked, “I think we can all agree that things are hard right now. We have way too many Oregonians who are having a hard time meeting, making ends meet, and there are challenges coming at us that are serious. And President Trump is just making them worse by creating disruption and uncertainty, and what I can tell you is that Christine Drazan as our next governor ... It's just going to get worse.

“So Christine Drazan has said, ‘Take a risk, vote for me.’ But if we look at her voting record, and we look at who she listens to, that would be a risk that I don't think we should take as a state. That risk would entail banning abortion, cutting the Oregon Health Plan, eliminating vote by mail, and when it comes to protecting our cities, when Oregon National Guard troops are deployed, no one would stand up for them. I believe, as governor, my job is to make life more affordable, get us the best schools, make sure we have the great-paying jobs that we need, and make sure we stand up for our values and the freedoms that we deserve, and I will continue fighting for the state. And I would be honored to have your vote in November as your governor.”

In her closing statement, Drazan said, “The governor has spent this evening changing the facts, running from her own record and asking Oregonians to ignore the parts of her record that they actually do remember. She is the sitting governor of our state, and the decline that we've experienced as a state has gotten worse and worse under her leadership. We cannot afford four more years of Tina Kotek. She has shown that she cannot be trusted to turn our state around.

“I'm running for governor because I believe that Oregon can be the best state in the nation to live and raise your family, to work, to start a business, to grow a business and to get a world-class education. Higher taxes are not the solutions to our problems. I have a plan that will solve the biggest challenges we're facing in schools, on our streets, and in our economy. I am committed to doing everything I can to earn your trust and earn your support. I love this place. I will do everything I can to lead with integrity and to serve Oregonians and deliver results.”

Editor’s note: The full debate can be watched here: myeagle.us/KotekDrazan

Richard Emmons is the publisher and editor of the Oregon Eagle.







Can Oregon's Housing Crisis Be Solved? Not With Today's Democratic Supermajority

By Brad Hicks

It's no secret that Oregon has a housing affordability crisis – and this graphic illustrates one reason why.

It estimates that permits, impact fees and plan review for a typical Oregon home can cost more than pouring and finishing the foundation itself.

Of course, new housing requires roads, water, sewer and other public infrastructure. Those are legitimate needs. But we should ask whether loading so much of that cost onto the next homebuyer is making the housing shortage even worse.

My ABC's offer a pretty straightforward test:

Affordability means recognizing that every government-imposed cost ultimately shows up in someone's mortgage or rent.

Balance means providing necessary infrastructure and maintaining safety standards without pricing working families out of the market.

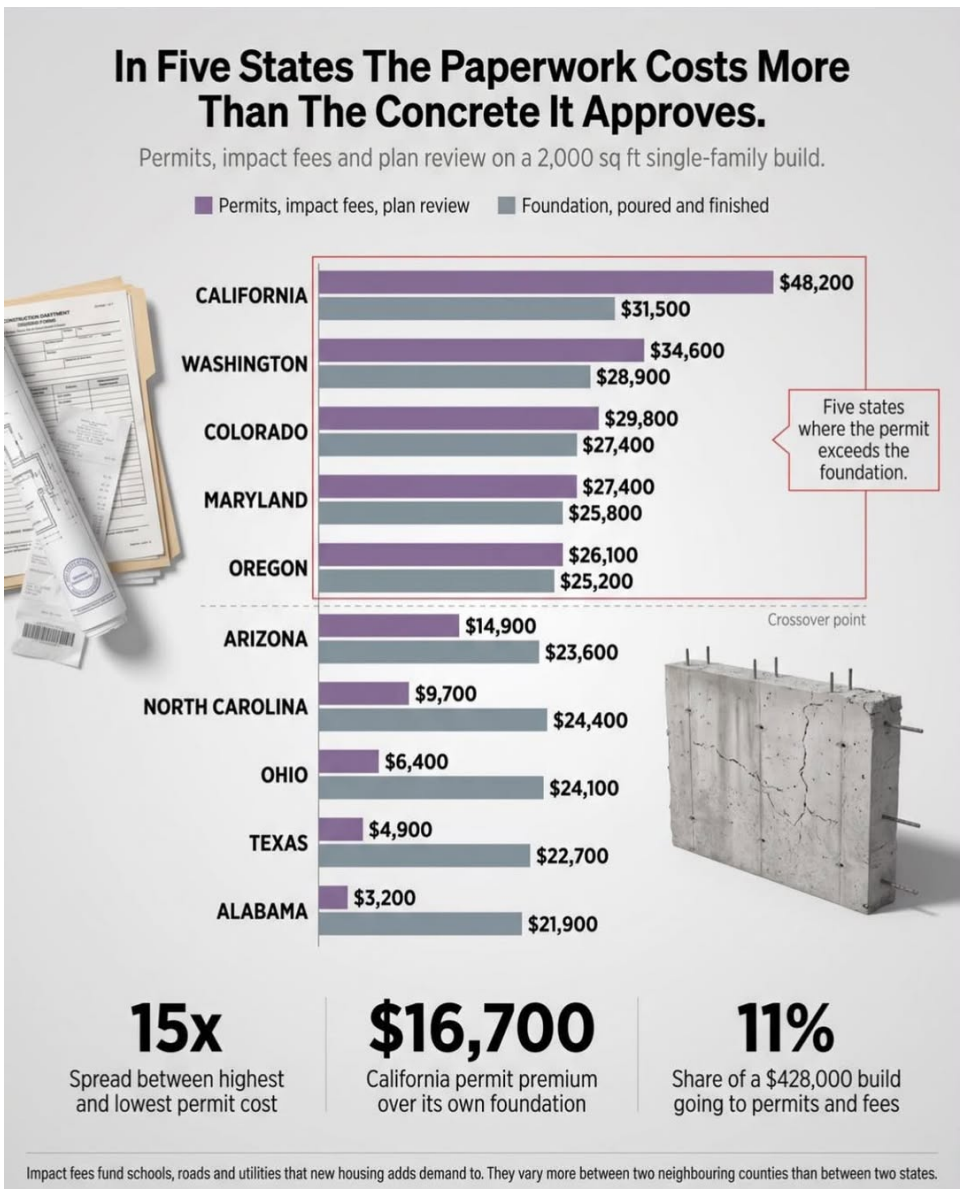
Common Sense means transparent fees, predictable approval timelines, fewer unnecessary delays and lower barriers for starter homes, workforce housing and projects built where infrastructure already exists.

Oregon needs more housing. We will not get it – or address our homeless issues – by making homes slower, harder and more expensive to build.



You cannot make housing more affordable by making housing less affordable to produce. Four more years of the supermajority's status quo is not going to get the job done, which is why I'm running to serve you in the Oregon Senate.

Brad Hicks is the Republican nominee running to represent Oregon State Senate District 3. He formerly served as the president and CEO of the Chamber of Medford & Jackson County for 30 years.



Health Care Plan From Page 16

public deserves the complete plan, the financial modeling and the answers necessary to evaluate it."

Yunker's letter requests an explanation for the missed deadline, identification of who approved any delay, the legal authority relied upon for extending the deadline, and the immediate release of completed financial modeling, proposed revenue mechanisms and implementation recommendations.

Vibes Aren't Enough: Schools Need Evidence of What Works (or Flops)



Credit: Freepik.com

By Joanne Jacobs

If an edtech vendor claims students will learn more, make them prove it, says Nicole Barnes, the American Psychological Association's lead education specialist. Schools shouldn't ban all edtech, says the APA in a new report.

School districts are limiting technology use, especially for younger children, reports Erica Meltzer on Chalkbeat. "New York City's school system just adopted what might be the most restrictive AI policy in the country," while Los Angeles Unified "banned laptops and tablets for young learners and prohibited the use of AI tools on school-issued devices."

The APA report warns that learning can't be measured by how much time students spend on apps, completion rates or student enjoyment. Often, "features designed to maintain student attention can distract from learning."

In addition, "learning platforms can be good for practicing specific skills, but claims about improved critical thinking are rarely supported by evidence," the report states.

"Schools should ask for independent evaluations of the effectiveness of learning tools, not studies commissioned by ed tech vendors," the report advises.

Education is "finally (finally) beginning to turn toward scientific evidence to help make better decisions to benefit kids," writes "Bell Ringer" Holly Korbey.

"A lot of education is done on vibes," Carl Hendrick, co-author of Instructional Illusions, told her. "In other words, I feel like I'm doing a really good thing. The kids are feeling like they're having a good time, so what's the problem?"

England has made significant gains in achievement by funding research and using the results, writes Helen Pearson in "Beyond Belief: How Evidence Shows What Really Works." The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) ran "more than 160 randomized controlled trials on everything from behavior interventions to phonics to tutoring" to create a Teaching and Learning Toolkit that's widely used in schools.

By contrast, U.S. research on evidence-based practices in reading and math was "pretty much ignored," writes Korbey. The What Works Clearinghouse, launched in the early 2000s, found "few of the popular interventions used in American schools were shown to have any evidence of efficacy behind them." As Pearson notes, it became known as the "Nothing Works Clearinghouse."

Now, Korbey sees signs of hope. "More university programs are incorporating cognitive science courses and evidence-based practices into clinical practice for new teachers." (You'd think it would be 100%.) Furthermore, "individual teachers are gathering, mostly online in social media forums, to share ideas about evidence-based practices" and report on what kinds of instruction produce the best results in their classrooms.

Parents don't have to rely on vibes to pick the best school for their children, Korbey concludes. "There is a bedrock of knowledge on what works in teaching and learning."

Joanne Jacobs is a freelance journalist who previously was an editorialist for the San Jose Mercury News for 23 years. She is the author of "Our School: The Inspiring Story of Two Teachers, One Big Idea, and the School That Beat the Odds." joannejacobs.com



Will the Fever's Sophie Cunningham Lose Her Career for Defending Women?

By Ray Hacke
World Magazine

Sophie Cunningham has a spirit of boldness, not of fear.

If the tall, blonde guard for the WNBA's Indiana Fever hasn't made that clear in her role as superstar teammate Caitlin Clark's de facto bodyguard on the basketball court, she certainly has by openly declaring that boys don't belong in girls' sports.

Here's the quote Cunningham gave ESPN for a profile of her that went viral on July 21:

"I get a lot of negative feedback about me hating trans (people). And I'm like, 'I never once said that.' I think that I am here to extend love. But I also think with that love is truth. And I want to protect young girls in a locker room, or young girls in sports who shouldn't have to go against a biological man."

Cunningham's quote got me thinking for multiple reasons.

First, it reminds me of 1 Corinthians 13:6: "Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth." If Cunningham was indeed leaning upon that verse when she spoke, it wouldn't surprise me: The former University of Missouri star got baptized for the second time in her life at Christ's Church of the Valley in Arizona back in April.

"I got baptized when I was little but I was feeling a tug on my heart to do it on my terms as an adult!" Cunningham, who played for the Phoenix Mercury for six years before being traded to Indiana before the 2025 season, told her 1.8 million TikTok followers. "Such a fun, amazing day. Thank you, Jesus!"

Cunningham's rededication of her life to Christ is a wonderful thing. However, it could come at a cost – namely, her career.

Think about it: The WNBA is about the most LGBT-friendly pro sports league in America, if not on the entire planet. And whenever Christian female pro athletes have been fearless enough to cross the rainbow mafia, they've found themselves unemployed soon after.

It happened to soccer player Jaelene Daniels (formerly Hinkle): The defender who declined an invite to join the U.S. women's national team (USWNT) in 2017 because she would have had to wear a Pride-themed jersey drew the ire of Northwest Women's Soccer League fans five years later when she skipped the North Carolina Courage's Pride match. In a manner not befitting its name, the Courage released Daniels at the end of the season, and no other NWSL team signed her, effectively forcing her into retirement.

Cunningham appears to have counted the cost of standing for truth, and she isn't backing down.

Something similar happened to Daniels' former back-row linemate with the Courage, Elizabeth Eddy. The defender for Los Angeles' Angel City FC dared argue last fall in a New York Times op-ed that being female should be a requirement for playing in a women's pro league. In response, two of her own teammates came out against her, as did the team itself. After no NWSL team signed her in the wake of the backlash, Eddy officially retired in March.

Given her popularity, WNBA teams would be stupid to blackball Cunningham – though popularity hasn't stopped players from trying to drive out Clark. Regardless, Cunningham appears to have counted the cost of standing for truth (Luke 14:27-29), and she isn't backing down. Asked about her remarks before the Fever's July 22 game against the Connecticut Sun, the 29-year-old told reporters, "I said what I said. I think it's kind of common sense.

"And I think I'll always believe in that. I think it's really important to protect children, and that's little girls who are also involved in that category. I stand on what I said."

Cunningham's stance matters. On July 28, at Indiana's road game against the Seattle Storm, two teenage girls sat courtside wearing apparel from XX-XY Athletics, a brand created specifically to promote the protection of women's sports. Surrounded by a very pro-LGBT+ crowd that vociferously booed Cunningham every time she touched the ball, the girls held up a sign that read, "Thank you, Sophie, for speaking up for girls."

Storm co-owner Celeste Keaton responded by berating the girls at halftime and reducing them to tears, calling them "(expletive) insane." Keaton did this even though Climate Pledge Arena, the Storm's home, prohibits abusive or obscene language and says violators could be ejected.

The Storm later issued the standard corporate apology: "Every person who attends a Storm game deserves to feel welcome, and we remain committed to creating an inclusive environment where every fan is treated with respect," the team said in a press release. The WNBA then suspended Keaton for five home games and fined her an undisclosed amount. Still, the incident underscores why Cunningham's stance requires courage.

As former ESPN reporter Sage Steele said on her podcast before the Seattle incident: "Sophie Cunningham did it – what no other woman in the WNBA has been willing to do: She stood up for other women.

"It's actually been maddening, frankly, to witness so many other women choose to ignore the obvious and basically virtue signal. … It's sad to me that it took so long."

Steele even called Cunningham "the kind of woman that I want my daughters to look up to." As the father of a Christian female athlete myself, I couldn't agree more.

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Ray Hacke is a correspondent for WORLD who has covered sports professionally for three decades. He is also a licensed attorney who lives in Keizer, Oregon. @RayHacke43

Confused About a Recommendation From Your Financial Adviser?

By Julie Jason

A reader, "Jennifer," reached out to share her confusion after a recommendation from her "financial adviser."

Jennifer and her husband are retired, and her adviser recommended that instead of her taking Social Security early (Jennifer is 68), she should invest in a fixed-index annuity using $500,000 of her IRA (approximately a third of their retirement money). In return, she would receive $39,500 annually for life with no legacy payout after she died.

Jennifer said her adviser recommended the annuity because he knew that she was "concerned about taking risk." She added that, "I heard a lot about the dangers of an annuity. Is this a move I should consider?"

Because my background is securities law, I always want to know the rules of the game before jumping in as a player. In the case of a fixed-index annuity, the rules are set state by state by insurance regulators, and the "adviser" selling the product is an "insurance producer."

This product is not a security regulated by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. That means the laws that protect investors have no relevance – with one exception: If the product is sold by a licensed insurance agent who is also working for a brokerage firm, he is likely regulated as a broker (registered representative of a broker-dealer) and possibly as an investment adviser representative of a registered investment advisory firm. In that case, additional conduct rules will apply.

Right there, you have an added layer of complexity that you don't have if you are buying a stock, bond or mutual fund, which are securities.

That means you have to become familiar with insurance regulations before you make that decision to go forward – again, it's not an "investment" governed by securities regulations.

Instead, you need to know the rules set out by the insurance regulator of your state.

Take Florida, for example. The Florida Office of Insurance Regulation approves annuity products for sale in the state. The NAIC Suitability in Annuity Transactions Model Regulation, adopted by Florida a few years ago, requires producers to act in a certain way at the time of the recommendation. The NAIC is the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (naic.org).

The standard is "best interest," which does not create the "fiduciary" standard that applies to registered investment advisers. However, importantly, it does create four core obligations that an insurance producer must satisfy with every sale: 1) care, 2) disclosure, 3) conflict of interest and 4) documentation.

These obligations are important to understand. As a consumer, if Jennifer is seriously considering this major purchase, she is not ready to go forward because of her lack of certainty about what she is buying. She deserves the protection of the Model Regulation, as do the residents of the 48 states that have adopted it.

What do I mean? Anytime you leave confused after being shown a product, the producer has failed to live up to the rules of the game. Under those circumstances, the best advice is to go back and ask for clarity – or simply walk away.

The rules require a written justification of why this product was chosen over others, considering not only goals but also costs of the product, surrender charges and what the producer will get paid for selling the product. That did not happen. And that explains why Jennifer is not comfortable with moving forward.

What the producer should have done is document why this particular product was in Jennifer's best interest to purchase, given Jennifer's age, income, net worth, objectives, time horizon, tax status and more. Further, the document should also have contained disclosure of material conflicts of interest benefiting the producer, such as sales quotas, sales contests or bonuses.

That's the place to start. Once (or if) you can get beyond these basics, you'll need to read the contract that governs the offering of the product, including restrictions on getting your money back. Then, compare other similar products offered by different vendors. Then, and only then, should you decide to proceed – or not.

If you want to read more about this type of product, see the webpages at FINRA (tinyurl.com/mry4yumu) and Investor.gov (tinyurl.com/esfr5erw).

Julie Jason is the founder and CEO of Jackson, Grant Investment Advisers, Inc. jacksongrant.us

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College Student Gets Into Credit Card Debt: Should Mom Bail Her Out?



Credit: Avery Evans at Unsplash

By Mary Hunt

Our kids are fortunate to be growing up in the most progressive and exciting time in history. Sadly, the very culture that offers them the world is also perpetrating this lie: "You are entitled to have everything you want, even if you don't have the money to pay for it. It's not a problem. You deserve it. Get it now, and you can pay for it later!"

There's a huge consumer credit industry out there planning to give your kids their very own credit cards – personal passports into the abyss of consumer debt. This will not require your permission or approval, something that one reader is experiencing firsthand.

Dear Mary: My daughter who is in college got a credit card, and now she is in over her head, unable to pay what she owes.

She works part time and makes a very small salary. With the high interest and late fees, the balance is now over $2,500. I will have to step in and handle the account.

How can I negotiate with the credit card company to settle for less? I don't know how she got this card on her salary. She kept quiet about not being able to make the payments until we started getting collection calls for her. I appreciate your thoughts and expertise. — Millie

Dear Millie: Honestly, I doubt very much that anyone will speak with you at customer service because you are not on the account. If your daughter wants to add you to the account, that might be an option. And I'm sure the company may welcome that, particularly if it has had a lot of trouble working with her.

Credit card issuing companies give young people who are enrolled in college outlandish lines of credit because they know parents will rescue their kids if they overextend themselves, and not just one time. Recent data and a variety of studies indicate that parents who bail a kid out of credit card debt once are far more likely to do it again!

May I step in here with some unsolicited advice? Don't do it. Don't bail her out, even if you feel you can afford it.

Unless your daughter has to suffer the consequences of her actions, she will not learn. Even if you were to bail her out now, I predict that within two years she will have $5,000 in credit card debt. Unless she does the hard work to repay her debt, she will not learn from her mistake.

You don't want to see bankruptcy and/or divorce in her future, but that's exactly where she's headed if this problem isn't addressed now.

For parents in your situation who cannot be deterred from performing this kind of financial rescue, there is something monumental they need to ask themselves: Can we afford it?

Frequently, I hear from readers who are facing their own financial problems – often a result of trying to help their kids. For certain, parents should not even think about paying off their children's debts – or co-signing a loan –if they don't have a sound retirement plan in place for themselves.

Unless you have your retirement on track, then to me, that's the end of the discussion. Retirement pensions aren't what they used to be. Social Security is not going to provide the same kind of income that it did for previous generations. No one is going to be there to help you.

As painful as it will be for you to step aside and not rescue your daughter, this could become a valuable maturing process to allow this child to become a responsible adult.

Your daughter may have to drop out of school to go to work full time. If she's really interested in getting an education, she'll be back.

That may sound harsh, but she has to understand how unacceptable this is and that no one is going to bail her out.

Lastly, make sure you are ready to offer lots of emotional support and encouragement. And it wouldn't hurt to have resources handy when she is ready to accept help.

Mary Hunt is the founder of Everyday-Cheapskate.com, a frugal living blog, and the author of the book "Debt-Proof Living."

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‘Learn to Code’? Here’s Real Advice for Keeping Ahead of the Robots

By Troy Broussard

During a 2019 New Hampshire campaign rally, Joe Biden told coal miners to “learn to program,” stating, “Anybody who can go down 300 to 3,000 feet in a mine, sure in hell can learn to program as well.” He proposed this as a transition to “jobs of the future,” though his commentary was not well-received and has since become the “learn to code” meme of today.

But, like much of what Biden said, this was utter nonsense. Telling coal miners to “learn to code” was insulting for one, but more importantly, just lame advice. The truth is, much of coding is now being replaced by AI (ask all of those thousands of laid-off Amazon and Microsoft coders how well that presidential career advice worked out for them).

Worst of all is that for AI to be truly effective at coding, it needs a very senior programmer to “prompt” it. Prompting is basically giving AI the parameters and requirements, the instructions on how to generate the code. Without super high quality and experienced guidelines and effective prompting, the code it spits out is utterly useless.

Don’t believe me? Well, Amazon’s own AWS services experienced record downtime recently because of poor quality AI code that was released prematurely without proper testing and crashed their cloud servers (prompting more layoffs). Yes, it has already happened.

So the irony here is that AI is replacing junior coders, doing the basic stuff. But if the junior coders are eliminated, how do they develop the skills to advance and become good programmers and then, eventually, really talented programmers? If AI eliminates the rolls at the junior level, it’s essentially sealing its own fate because without quality developers to instruct and prompt it, AI code is garbage.

But corporate America is always shortsighted and focused on the next earnings call more than five years from now. All of this to say, “learn to code” was not very helpful advice from our former cucumber in chief, I mean former commander in chief. (Oops, did I say that?)

So what would President Troy have said instead? I would say …

“Learn to Trade”

In fact, this is something that Vlad Tenev, the CEO of Robinhood, offered as advice not too long ago as well, stating that becoming a trader could become essential for the future as a way of wealth creation. Which, ironically, I have been saying for more than three years now.

Money loves SPEED!

This is something I have taught for years. So best to go fast and furious while we have this market advantage of trading as a source of income generation.

Honestly, I truly don’t know what will become of many of the jobs in the future as AI does a better job of them than most humans can. When Optimus Prime (Tesla’s soon to be released robot) comes online, many jobs will just be eliminated in short order.

Today Steak ’n Shake has the best order taking kiosks in the industry. Those have served them well, reducing staffing requirements and providing a self-service approach to getting a better burger at an affordable price.

But tomorrow you will have kiosks combined with Optimus Prime robots flipping the burgers and boxing the fries. I’m sure in the beginning there will be a token human at the store to “oversee” the robots, but in time, that won’t be necessary either.

You can repeat that across any industry you want. Realtors? Don’t need ‘em. A simple automated lock box, cameras, a guided tour from an Optimus bot and an AI closing process absent a 7% commission is all that’s needed. That, too, has already started, by the way.

And yes, I can go on and on across industry after industry and the story will be the same. Robots will do a better job in many basic, entry-level service industries.

So what can you do?

You can embrace the speed of our Low Stress Trading platform in getting ahead of the financial curve and take money generation up a level in your life. I really encourage you to play around with our simulator on what 1% a week growth can do for you (even if you start out with a small $10k trading account) here:

LSOcalc.com

By the way … look at how starting with $10k and putting in just $50 a week can turn into $194,364.78 and $8,422.47 a month in just five years by playing around with the calculator. This is how you stay one step ahead of the robots.

Then, after you do, go here to join in the fun and **“learn to trade!”**

LSToregon.com

Troy Broussard is a former Navy Nuclear Engineer-turned world-renowned Options trader and trading coach.To see how he trades Options in a way that can potentially generate 1% a week on your portfolio with just 1-2 hours of time a week, all while winning about 98% or more of your trades, go to **www.LSTOregon.com.** *You can download a free copy of his “How To Create Cashflow Faster Than Inflation Can Destroy It” as well as join his next free, live call on how his Options trading strategy works.*

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“while still protecting genuinely proprietary or competitively sensitive information.”

“More consistent reporting of costs and outcomes will help policymakers, providers, researchers and the public understand where the system is working and where it needs improvement,” Cronin said.

ProPublica highlighted Oregon’s secrecy around low-income housing in August. Since 2021, our story noted, Oregon has given developers an unprecedented $1.4 billion, and the cost of developing each low-income apartment has nearly doubled, to $540,000. Dozens of projects are lined up for another $850 million in future state funding, and costs are expected to continue rising.

“We are spending, as you said, a lot of money on the development of affordable housing,” Marsh said. “We really need to understand what it is that we’re funding, how much it costs, why it costs that much, and be able to justify the investments that we’re making.”

In other states, researchers and journalists have used the financial records from subsidized housing projects to investigate their spiraling costs and the drivers behind the growing price tag.

Marsh said after reading the ProPublica story that she “pretty much immediately” looked up the provision in Oregon public records law that officials cite for keeping cost details secret. She said financial documents that show where a project’s money is coming from and what it’s going to should be public and easily accessed. She said she would like to see them posted online as part of the public materials that Oregon’s Housing Stability Council receives for each project before awarding subsidies.

Pham, in a written statement, said: “It’s imperative that Oregonians can trust that our state government is investing in affordable housing as cost-effectively as possible. I appreciated ProPublica’s reporting on Oregon’s inadequate public records law that hinders our ability to monitor how affordable-housing funds are being spent, and I’m hopeful legislators can address this next year.”

Oregon’s Sunshine Committee, which reviews public records exemptions and recommends ones that could be rolled back, is also examining the exemption for housing financials as a result of ProPublica’s coverage, co-chair Charlie Fisher said.

It’s not clear where opposition to repeal efforts, if any, might arise. Officials in Washington and California, where the details of state spending on subsidized housing are available to the public, have said it hasn’t interfered with low-income housing efforts.

Oregon Housing and Community Services, the state housing agency that persuaded lawmakers to create the records exemption in 1997, cited the law in redacting major sections of developers’ cost reports that ProPublica requested in May.

The agency’s current executive director, Andrea Bell, told ProPublica in July that she is committed to transparency but that the agency is following the law as it stands today.

Asked to comment about whether the agency would support efforts to change the law, a spokesperson said by email that state agencies don’t take positions on bills. “OHCS appreciates the opportunity to review the legislation” that’s introduced in 2027, the spokesperson wrote.

Rob Davis covers the environment and business in the Pacific Northwest. Propublica.org

Day Trading Got You Down?



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Learn more in Troy's free, interactive training (asking Troy anything you want!) for Oregon Eagle readers at LSTOregon.com.

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after she ran for governor in 2022, said he has seen Drazan side with her party over the needs of Oregonians throughout his time serving in the Oregon House, where she was a former House minority leader. He pointed to her support for a bill imposing restrictions and criminal penalties for abortion providers as well as her vote against a 2025 law supporting funding for Oregon’s Medicaid program, which six Republicans crossed party lines to support.

“The governor can slow funding, tell agencies to not enforce laws and impose executive orders similar to what we are seeing Trump do at the federal level,” Nelson said. “I’m not seeing anyone in the media talking about this.”

Drazan has managed to walk a fine line on the issue given that the race hasn’t received national attention through an endorsement from President Donald Trump or significant backing from the Republican Governors Association. During Drazan’s unsuccessful 2022 bid for governor, the national Republican gubernatorial fundraising arm considered her as a high priority for a potential pickup seat for the party.

Over the past few years, however, Drazan has supported legislation to overturn Oregon’s vote-by-mail system in favor of in-person voting, described the state’s Medicaid program as too generous and placed blame with the state’s sanctuary policies, which limit state and local governments’ cooperation with immigration authorities without a judicial warrant.

Drazan’s statement following Trump’s announcement of an attempted National Guard deployment to Portland last year condemned “violent mobs and domestic terrorists” and said “we need order, we need to restore safety, and Oregon’s local leaders have failed to provide it.” The senator has maintained that her statement was not a position on Trump’s attempt to deploy the National Guard to the city.

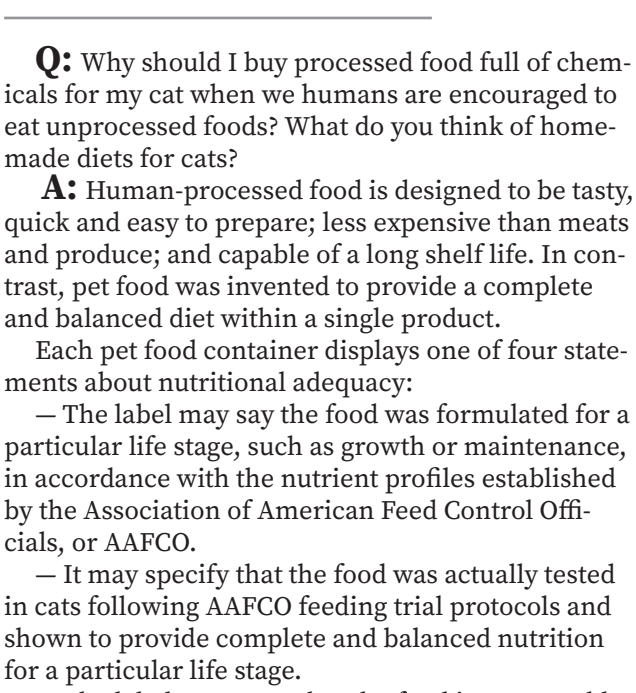
“I will always, always, always stand up for Oregonians,” Drazan told reporters in August when asked if she would stand up to the federal government. “You guys are going to see me continue throughout this campaign (to do) that, into my administration.”

An ad from Drazan’s campaign homes in on Oregon’s ranking among the worst in the nation for education outcomes amid increased state spend

See Tour, Page 23

Sudoku Challenge

4	9			5				
		8		7	4		3	
			1		3		4	
						4	2	1
		1				5		
5	4	7						
	2		9		8			
	8		5	3		9		
				2			8	6



Enjoy a Riddle or Two...

Q1: Why shouldn't you tell a secret in a cornfield?

Q2: How do you surprise a pumpkin?

6	8	3	7	2	4	5	1	9
2	1	9	6	3	5	4	8	7
4	5	7	8	1	9	6	2	3
3	6	6	1	8	2	7	4	5
8	7	5	9	4	3	1	6	2
1	2	4	5	9	7	9	3	8
5	4	8	3	9	1	2	7	6
9	3	2	4	7	6	8	5	4

Sudoku Solutions

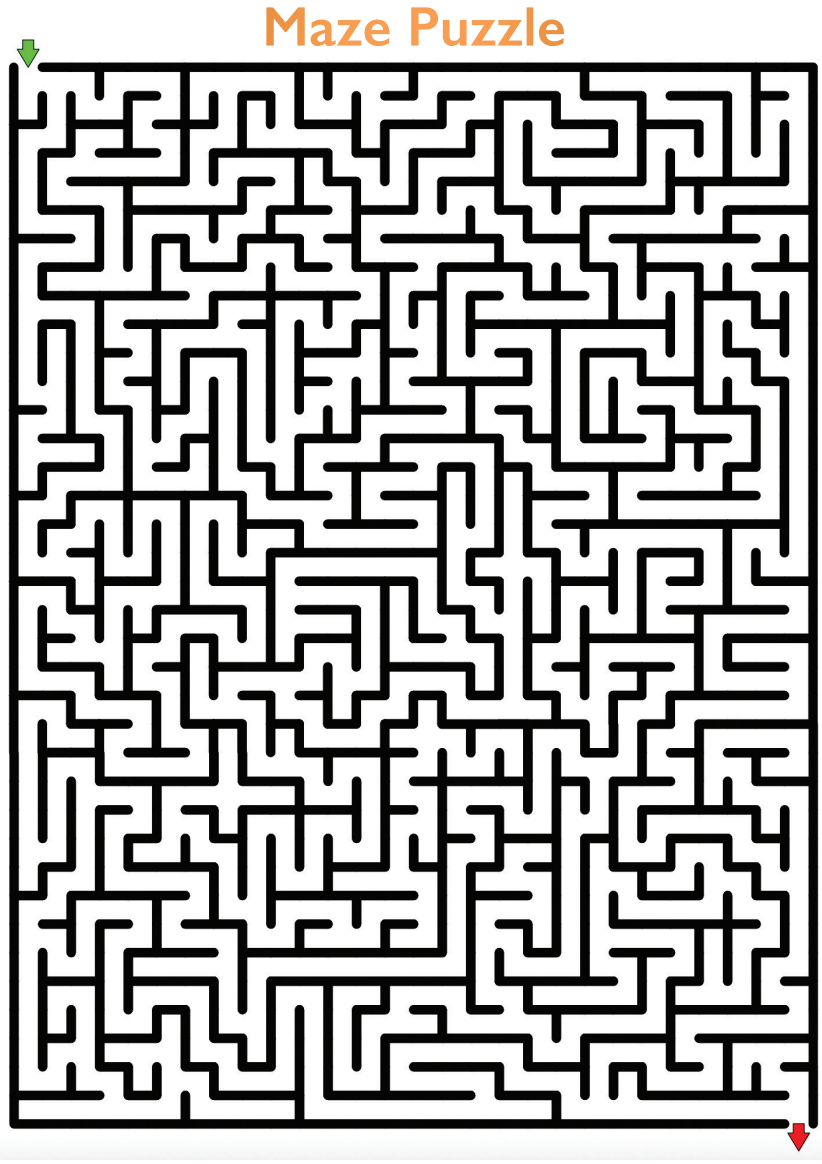
Riddle Answers

A1: Because the corn has ears.

A2: You catch them off-gourd.



Maze Puzzle



We're Told to eat Unprocessed Food - Why Not the Same for My Cat?

By Lee Pickett

Q: Why should I buy processed food full of chemicals for my cat when we humans are encouraged to eat unprocessed foods? What do you think of homemade diets for cats?

A: Human-processed food is designed to be tasty, quick and easy to prepare; less expensive than meats and produce; and capable of a long shelf life. In contrast, pet food was invented to provide a complete and balanced diet within a single product.

Each pet food container displays one of four statements about nutritional adequacy:

— The label may say the food was formulated for a particular life stage, such as growth or maintenance, in accordance with the nutrient profiles established by the Association of American Feed Control Officials, or AAFCO.

— It may specify that the food was actually tested in cats following AAFCO feeding trial protocols and shown to provide complete and balanced nutrition for a particular life stage.

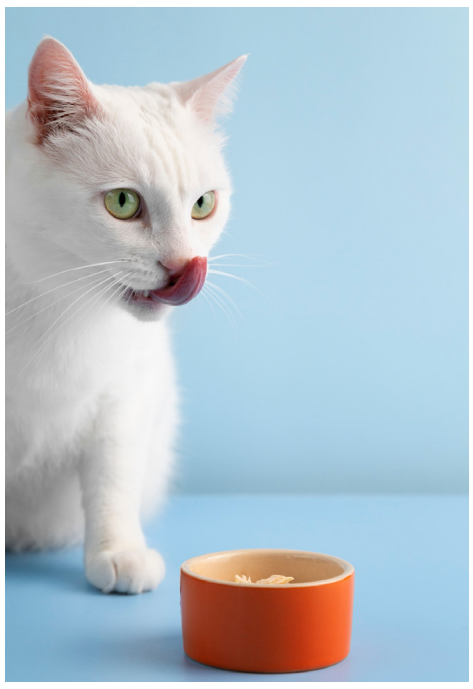
— The label may state that the food is comparable in nutritional adequacy to another diet that was tested using AAFCO protocols.

— Or the label may indicate the product is only for intermittent or supplementary use. In other words, the product, usually a treat, is not balanced or nutritionally complete.

The chemicals you're concerned about are usually nutrients. For example, pyridoxine hydrochloride may sound scary, but it's just vitamin B6. Another example, taurine, is an essential amino acid for cats; deficiencies cause heart failure and blindness.

Finally, research shows that most homemade diets, whether published in books or on the internet, are actually unbalanced and nutritionally inadequate. A 2019 study of 114 homemade recipes promoted for adult cats found that all contained nutrient deficiencies.

Talk with your veterinarian, who can advise you about the best foods for your cat.



Credit: magnific.com

Q: Stormi, my new kitten, will be an indoor-outdoor cat. I know she needs to be vaccinated and eventually sterilized, but isn't it better to let her have one litter of kittens before that?

A: Cats live longer, healthier lives if they don't have kittens and are sterilized between 2 and 6 months of age. Later sterilization increases the risk of mammary (breast) cancer, the third-most common cancer in female cats.

Mammary cancer is aggressively malignant. By the time it's discovered, it has already spread to the other mammary glands, lymph nodes and lungs. Surgery and chemotherapy are ineffective, so survival is less than a year.

The risk is decreased by sterilization, called spay surgery in females. Cats spayed by 6 and 12 months have 91% and 86% decreased risk, respectively, of developing mammary cancer. Waiting until the cat is 2 years old decreases risk only 11%.

Have your veterinarian spay Stormi as soon as her vaccination series is complete, or she may surprise you by going into heat. Typical heat behaviors include rubbing, nuzzling, rolling, crying, yowling, raising her behind and spraying urine.

Female cats are seasonally polyestrus, which means they are in heat during seasons with increasing and long daylight, and they have multiple ("poly-") heat cycles ("-estrus").

As daylight increases in January, female cats as young as 4 months go into heat, and they continue to have weeklong heat cycles through the end of summer. If the cat isn't bred during her first heat, she goes into heat about a week later. This pattern of recurrent heat cycles makes it seem as though the unspayed cat is always in heat.

Cats are pregnant for two months, giving birth during the warm months of spring, summer and fall. It's not uncommon for a female to have two litters a year.

Yet another reason to have Stormi spayed is to prevent uterine infection, which strikes 1 in 4 unspayed cats.

You can avert unpleasant heats, uterine infection and mammary cancer by having Stormi spayed soon.

Lee Pickett, VMD, practices companion animal medicine in North Carolina. Contact her at https://askthevet.pet.

Death Sentence From Page I

pened slowly as people deteriorated physically and mentally in plain sight. Too often, sleeping bags have become body bags and tents have become tombs.

Meanwhile, we have built a multibillion-dollar homelessness industry that continues to operate at the pace of bureaucracy while the people it is supposed to help are living in an emergency. When I use the term "Homeless Industrial Complex," I am talking about the massive network of government agencies, nonprofits, contractors, consultants, outreach programs, housing providers and service organizations receiving billions of taxpayer dollars every year to address homelessness.

Many people working inside this system genuinely care, but the system itself has become remarkably good at managing homelessness while failing to end it. Budgets grow, programs expand, and yet homelessness in many communities continues to worsen. Too often, success is measured by dollars spent, contacts made, or services offered instead of whether somebody actually got off the streets, entered recovery, found work, became stable, or remained housed. When an industry grows financially while the problem it exists to solve also grows, taxpayers have every right to demand answers.

The Portland metropolitan area has spent hundreds of millions of dollars annually addressing homelessness, with one recent estimate putting regional spending at roughly $724 million in a single year. That money supports permanent supportive housing, emergency shelters, rental assistance, prevention programs, street outreach, administration, safety programs and other services. Many of those programs are necessary, and I am not arguing that we should stop spending money on homelessness. I am asking what taxpayers are getting in return.

Spending has climbed dramatically while homelessness has continued to grow. That does not mean spending itself causes homelessness or that every program is failing, but it should force elected officials to answer a basic question: Are we spending the money in the right places, and are the programs receiving it producing measurable results? Money alone clearly has not solved the problem. My strongest criticism is not directed at frontline workers. I worked alongside many excellent people for decades who gave everything they had to help people survive and rebuild their lives. Most did not enter this field for money, power, or recognition.



My criticism is directed primarily at lawmakers, government administrators and nonprofit executives who create the policies frontline workers are expected to follow. Too many decisions appear disconnected from what is actually happening on the streets. This field requires more than education and credentials. It requires judgment, street experience, common sense, communication skills and the ability to build trust with people who may have rejected services for years.

Most importantly, every publicly funded program should be required to demonstrate outcomes. How many people moved indoors? How many remained housed? How many entered detox or treatment? How many found employment, reconnected with family, or entered recovery? How many returned to homelessness? Outreach teams should not be judged simply by how many contacts they make. A contact is not an outcome.

We should redirect resources toward assertive, persistent outreach teams that have the training, experience, authority and tools to solve problems on the street. An outreach worker should not hand somebody a brochure, give them a phone number, record a "contact" and disappear. Whenever possible, that worker should be able to connect a person immediately to shelter, treatment, identification, transportation, medical care, recovery services, employment resources, or family reunification. A homeless person should not have to navigate five different organizations, repeat the same story five times, complete multiple applications and wait weeks for something as basic as identification or a working phone.

We have built an incredibly complicated bureaucracy around a population that is often least capable of navigating complicated bureaucracies. If taxpayers are spending billions, getting help should become easier, not harder.

Portland's embrace of Harm Reduction is one of the clearest examples of how our priorities have shifted. Supporters argue that providing pipes, straws, foil and other supplies can reduce certain health risks and keep people alive long enough to eventually choose treatment. I understand that argument. My concern is that in Portland, Harm Reduction has too often moved beyond reducing harm and into facilitating continued addiction.

Outreach workers distribute supplies used to consume fentanyl, one of the most potent and deadly drugs on the street, while treatment and recovery can feel secondary. At some point, we have to ask where Harm Reduction ends and enabling begins. Handing an addicted person the equipment needed to continue using fentanyl is not the same thing as helping that person recover. Compassion should mean fighting to keep people alive and fighting just as hard to help them escape addiction.

If government is spending millions of taxpayer dollars on addiction and homelessness, the objective should ultimately be detox, treatment, recovery, stability, work, responsibility and self-sufficiency. Keeping someone alive for another day is important, but it cannot become the final goal. The goal should be helping that person build a life where they no longer need the pipe, straw, foil or fentanyl at all.

For women, the streets can be especially brutal. Nearly every homeless woman I have interviewed has described sexual harassment, assault, exploitation, or the constant fear of becoming a victim. Many talk about sexual assault not as some distant possibility but as something they constantly prepare themselves for. Even when homelessness does not literally end in death, the trauma people endure can destroy them in other ways. After interviewing thousands of homeless people, I have heard stories of violence and exploitation that most Americans could barely imagine.

That is another reason I struggle with a system that moves at the pace of bureaucracy while people on the streets are living minute to minute. One man I will never forget was K-9. I met him after he had been released from prison for robbery. He was living in what people call the "Pit," a small triangular green space notorious for homeless camping and open-air drug activity. His camp was farther down a path, separated by a bridge overpass and a wall, and at the end was an even smaller patch of green space surrounded by a wall more than twelve feet high. Places like this are sometimes occupied by homeless "mayors," people who gain status on the streets because they are respected, feared, or both.

I first met K-9 on an extremely hot summer day. He was desperately thirsty, so I bought him a case of water. Over the next several months, I interviewed him repeatedly and encouraged him to connect with social services. He deeply mistrusted the system and was reluctant to ask for help. He also told me that despite living in a highly visible homeless encampment, he had never been contacted by an outreach worker. Eventually, K-9 decided he wanted a phone because he was interested in finding work and getting off the streets. He walked into a nearby homeless shelter and tried to get assistance obtaining one. According to him, the process became so frustrating and difficult that after several weeks he gave up.

A few days later, K-9 acquired a used phone. For reasons only he understood, he decided to lift a manhole cover and climb underground. At the bottom were heavy electrical wires powering nearby streetlights. He apparently attempted to splice into one of those wires to charge his phone and was electrocuted. One of his homeless friends pulled him from the hole, and K-9 died in his arms. I have thought about his death many times. What if someone had reached him months earlier? What if persistent outreach had built enough trust to connect him with services? What if something as basic as getting a working phone had not become another bureaucratic obstacle? There is no way to know whether any of those things would have saved him. K-9 made the decision to climb into that hole, and personal responsibility still matters. But when we spend billions of dollars on homelessness services, we have an obligation to ask whether there were opportunities to intervene before somebody reached that point.



K-9 with Kevin Dahlgren
Credit: Photo by Tara Faul

Then there was Zack. I met him in late December shortly after a major snowstorm. He emerged from his tent in bitterly cold weather wearing nowhere near enough clothing. Over the years, I interviewed him dozens of times, and for much of that time Zack openly told me that he chose to be homeless. Eventually, that began to change. During the final year of his life, I strongly encouraged him to seek services, and he agreed. But again and again, he told me he encountered barriers, restrictions and frustrations. Eventually, he gave up. In one of my last interviews with him, Zack told me he was going to stop trying. He had accepted that he would probably spend the rest of his life on the streets. A few days later, he was dead. He was found on the same sidewalk where he had spent much of his time. He had overdosed, and apparently nobody noticed what was happening in time to administer Narcan. These are not statistics to me. They are people I knew.

That is why the homelessness system must finally be held accountable for outcomes instead of intentions. A program may report how many "contacts" an outreach worker made or how many people were "engaged," but those numbers mean very little unless they lead somewhere. Was the person connected to detox? Did they enter treatment? Did they obtain shelter? Did they get permanent housing? Did they remain housed? Did they find employment? Did they reconnect with family? Did their health improve? Are they still alive?

We would never judge a fire department by counting how many burning buildings firefighters looked at. We would ask whether they responded, whether people were rescued, whether the fire was extinguished, and whether lives were saved. Homelessness services should face the same fundamental question: Did your intervention make the person's life better?

Not every death can be prevented, and not every homeless person will accept help. Addiction, mental illness, trauma, personal choice and individual responsibility all matter. I know that after decades working in this field. But those realities cannot become excuses for a system that spends enormous amounts of public money while human beings deteriorate and die on sidewalks. If homelessness really is a life-or-death emergency, then we need to start treating it like one. That means assertive and persistent outreach. It means accessible detox, treatment and recovery. It means shelter with expectations. It means mental-health intervention for people who are incapable of caring for themselves. It means eliminating unnecessary bureaucratic barriers and giving frontline workers the ability to solve problems immediately. And it means measuring success by whether people's lives actually improve, not by how much money was spent or how many contacts were recorded.

K-9 should matter. Zack should matter. Every person who dies alone in a tent, doorway, sidewalk, vehicle, riverbank, or abandoned building should matter. The purpose of a homelessness system should not be to manage homelessness. It should be to get people out of it before the streets kill them.

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Kevin Dahlgren is a freelance journalist, a drug and alcohol counselor and homelessness consultant. He lives in Portland, Oregon, and has worked in social services for over 25 years. truthonthestreets.substack.com

Trump's Top 25 From Page 11

nightmare finally ended.

Since returning to office, Trump has enforced the Hyde Amendment prohibiting the use of federal funds to pay for abortions, reinstated and expanded the Mexico City Policy prohibiting federal funding of foreign abortions, ended federal fetal-tissue research, strengthened conscience protections, protected Medicaid from funding large abortion providers and pardoned 23 pro-life activists prosecuted by Biden's weaponized Justice Department.

He's also done everything within the Executive Branch's power to defund Planned Parenthood. It would be nice if Congress did likewise.

No president has ever done more to protect life. No one.

18. He got men out of women's sports and restored biological reality to federal policy.

The United States government once again officially recognizes two sexes: male and female. Trump ended federal support for the chemical and surgical gender mutilation of children, stopped taxpayer funding of such irreversible abominations and forced more than three dozen health systems to end or suspend their programs as well.

Trump also enforced Title IX as written: Women and girls deserve their own teams, trophies, scholarships and locker rooms. The NCAA and other athletic organizations changed their rules in response.

19. He enacted America's first nationwide school-choice program – and launched Trump Accounts.

As part of the president's One Big Beautiful Bill, Trump enacted America's first-ever nationwide school choice program. The new Education Freedom Tax Credit helps fund scholarships for tuition, books and other educational costs.

That's on top of the new Trump Accounts, which give every child a tax-advantaged stake in America's future, including a $1,000 federal seed for eligible newborns. Parents gain power. Bureaucracies lose it. And children learn firsthand about free markets and future orientation.

20. He targeted anti-Christian bias and discrimination.

Trump created the White House Faith Office, Religious Liberty Commission and Task Force to Eradicate Anti-Christian Bias. He restored conscience protections and made clear that Christians do not surrender their First Amendment rights merely by entering public life.

He restored peace through strength and put America First

21. He forced NATO to stop freeloading and increase defense spending by 250%.

For decades, wealthy European governments underfunded their militaries, effectively sending America the bill and using American taxpayers to subsidize their bloated welfare states. Trump forced NATO to replace its old 2-percent-of-GDP spending target with an enormous 5% by 2035.

22. He drove China out of the Caribbean.

China spent years building strategic beachheads at both ends of the Panama Canal, in Cuba, and in Maduro's Venezuela. Trump forced Panama out of Belt and Road, expanded American security access around the Canal and captured Nicolas Maduro, who now sits in a New York jail cell awaiting trial.

Beijing's planned encirclement of the United States collapsed. The Monroe Doctrine is back. Call it the Donroe Doctrine.

23. He brokered eight peace deals in just eight months.

In eight months, Trump brokered peace in eight conflicts spanning four continents, including wars that had gone on for as many as 40 years. It's a record unmatched by any other president.

24. He launched and funded Golden Dome, the first-ever true missile defense for the U.S. population.

Ronald Reagan dreamed of making nuclear missiles obsolete through his Strategic Defense Initiative. Today, Trump is actually building it: a layered homeland shield with space-based sensors and interceptors, conventional defenses and new technologies, including microwave systems to destroy drone swarms and directed-energy weapons (yes, lasers) that can replace an $11 million missile with $2 of electricity.

25. He restored the warrior ethos – and reversed the recruiting crisis.

After years of missed targets under Biden, every active military component met or exceeded its 2025 recruiting goal. Trump and War Secretary Pete Hegseth refocused the newly renamed Department of War on actually winning wars, while pouring resources into shipbuilding, munitions, drones, missile defense and America's atrophied industrial base.

Young Americans once again believe their commander in chief is worth serving. And they're showing up en masse.

Can't get enough? Here are 25 More Trump Achievements you should know! *https://www.rodmartin.org/p/25-more-trump-achievements-the-first*

Rod D. Martin, Founder and CEO of Martin Capital, is a technology entrepreneur, investor and futurist from Destin, Florida. rodmartin.org

Tour From Page 20

ing and suspended high school graduation requirements. The video references her "Drazan Plan," a set of values and broad policy positions aimed at lowering taxes and regulations that the senator unveiled in Portland in August as she seeks to court centrist and liberal voters in the metro region.

"Tina Kotek is a failed governor. Whether it's affordability, homelessness, housing or education, Oregonians are living with the consequences of the mess she's made every single day," Drazan campaign manager Trey Rosser said in a statement. "On November 3rd, voters will be holding a 'No Kotek in Oregon' event of their own."

Shaanth Nanguneri is a reporter at the Oregon Capital Chronicle. oregoncapitalchronicle.com

"Whoever is faithful with very little will also be faithful with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much."
Luke 16:10

Unsealed Docs From Page 6

of "any effort to detect or remove paywalled content" from training data.

Microsoft spokesman Alex Haurek told The New York Times that Hecht's writings reflected "one employee's individual perspective," were not legal analysis and did not represent Microsoft's views.

OpenAI argued that training on publicly available material is fair use in January 2024.

"You can't be expected to have a successful AI program when every single article, book or anything else that you've read or studied, you're supposed to pay for," President Donald Trump said in July 2025 when he announced the AI Action Plan, Politico reported .

Swarztrauber argued the case could push the industry toward a market for licensing publishers' work.

"[T]he reason this market has been stifled is because the official position of the AI industry has been: we don't have to. We owe you nothing," Swarztrauber said. "There's no reason that the most sophisticated companies in human history cannot figure out a way to pay people for their work."

This article originally appeared in the Daily Caller. dailycallernewsfoundation.org
Dylan Kresak is a writer at the Daily Caller News Foundation.

Government Unions From Page 7

unions tend to align with Democratic and progressive causes while employees tend to vote for Republicans.

"While workers have a constitutional right to hold these views, many do not," Allen said. "The question is whether union leaders are using those members' money to advance political positions their members do not support."

Allen said millions of dollars in dues often support trips, luxury accommodations and high leadership salaries. Political contribution records revealed that union PACs spend more than 90% of political expenditures on Democratic politicians and causes, Allen noted.

"Many American workers are not getting the union representation they want or deserve," Allen said. "We must hold these union leaders accountable for forgetting who they represent, not their own interest but the interests of millions of American workers."

Withe said the Freedom Foundation has engaged in door-to-door campaigns educating union workers about the causes their membership may support. He said most workers are unaware of what their membership dues go toward.

"Even if they do know, oftentimes the unions make it so complicated about how to leave the union, they certainly wouldn't know how to navigate that," Withe said. "We've helped hundreds of thousands of workers to opt out of their unions and stop paying union dues."

Withe pointed to confusing rules regarding when union members can opt-out of the programs. Some unions only allow members to opt-out during a two week period based on when that member joined.

He also recounted how some unions forged signatures of members, unbeknownst to the forgery's subject. Often, Withe said, members do not realize that signing union membership cards is optional because some states force individuals into a room until they make concessions.

"We've had 15 lawsuits that we filed at the Freedom Foundation against unions because we've caught unions signing these documents on behalf of these people, and when they try to leave their union, they use those forms as contracts to block their ability to leave," Withe said.

Democratic lawmakers criticized opposition to the political involvement of labor unions. Rep. Mark DeSaulnier, D-Calif., slammed the Trump administration for what he said was the president ignoring corporate influence in elections in favor of union involvement.

"While elected officials may not agree with every action or statement that unions may make, they work on behalf of their membership," DeSaulnier said.

The California Democrat pointed to overall public approval for unions: 71%, according to annual polling from Gallup. Withe estimated that 40% of individuals leave unions after the Freedom Foundation meets with them.

"These people are being taken advantage of more than anybody else because a union inherently can't do anything for them," Withe said.

New York and Oregon have banned the Freedom Foundation from disparaging union membership, arguing that the organization mischaracterizes union intentions.

"State legislators who are completely under the thumb of these government unions have passed these laws in order to weaponize the state against the Freedom Foundation so that we will stop telling people to leave their unions," Waith said.

"The problem that you have with government unions in America is they're monopolistic in nature," he continued. "So you have these big national unions in America today that are taking billions of dollars from public employees' checks and they don't have to represent these people. They don't have to give them fair representation."

Andrew Rice is an apprentice reporter for The Center Square. thecentersquare.com

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