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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Commission ballot measures, vote-by-mail, and Bentz's choices

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Letters TO THE Editor

TROGUE VALLEY
TIMES

Commissioners show why we need nonpartisan board

When Jackson County commissioners convene their weekly staff meetings with the county administrator and deputies, in government facilities, their deliberations cost taxpayers around \$1,000 per hour.

They are supposed to be working on the county's business, not orchestrating partisan political matters. But that is exactly what happened on Jan. 11, when Rick Dyer reported as board "liaison" with the Jackson County Republican Party and strategized with Colleen Roberts and Dave Dotterer on when and how they would coordinate to oppose the nonpartisan, grassroots initiatives that would reform the board.

Chat

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“The Party has taken this on as one of their biggest, the main issues.” Dyer knew he was over the line: "We don't want to be caught flat-footed ... I'm not saying as the Board."

Yet the commissioners proceeded to use board time and county resources to plan their campaign of opposition. This on-the-record episode is compelling proof why voters need a chance to approve Measure 1: Make the office of Commissioner nonpartisan like all other elected County officials.

Stop them from using their \$143,000/year posts and taxpayer-paid assets to execute party-driven partisan agendas. Aren't we all sick of partisan politics?

Laura Ahearn / Applegate Valley

Commissioners should want to support ballot measures

Concerns have been expressed regarding the current Jackson County commissioners' apparent lack of support for the three proposed ballot measures that, if passed by the voters, would change the political nature, structure and salaries of county commissioners.

But their personal opinions about the measures' outcome shouldn't distract attention from the first task at hand: Getting signatures on the petitions that will put the measures on the ballot ... ballot measures to ensure that the will of the electorate is expressed and acted on.

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In fact, I would expect that all three commissioners would enthusiastically support the process for getting those measures on the ballot — a position integral to their individual and collective commitments and responsibilities to make sure the voices of the people are heard.

Larry J. Clark / Gold Hill

State's proven vote-by-mail process must be protected

Oregon's Republican Party is calling for an end to vote-by-mail. It's just one part of an alarming overhaul to our state's electoral system that you can read about on Page 2 of their new platform at <https://oregon.gop/>.

If Oregon voters give them power, voter registration will be severely restricted and allowable only in person. The GOP will mandate same day, in-person voting, with all ballots tabulated by hand. Each county will be allowed to make its own rules for how to administer elections.

In so many respects, today's GOP just ain't what it used to be. Never mind that it was a GOP-controlled Legislature that birthed Oregon's vote-by-mail system in 1981. Never mind that Republican secretaries of state from Norma Paulus to Dennis Richardson to Bev Clarno have been among its most vocal champions.

Today's Republican Party is calling for its abolition.

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Oregon's electoral model has been tested and refined over several decades. Many states have adopted it successfully, while others are envious. Voter surveys over the years document that Oregonians are proud of this innovation in civic engagement.

If you share this pride, and are concerned about preserving our right to vote, please consider this: Which party is actively seeking to curtail your freedom to vote? Which party do you suppose will protect it?

David Sours / Jacksonville

Bentz picks and chooses his Constitutional priorities

In a recent edition of the Rogue Valley Times, Rep. Cliff Bentz is reported to have endorsed former president Trump. In December, the Rogue Valley Times reported that Rep. Bentz was challenging the expansion of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, saying that serious constitutional issues were involved.

His constitutional priorities placed him firmly in the category of a cafeteria constitutionalist, picking out which provisions of our founding document he agrees with like selections in a buffet line.

Expanding a national monument is a serious constitutional issue. Attempting to overturn an election and encouraging and helping to plan an insurrection, ending our country's tradition of a peaceful transfer of power? Oh well, nothing to see here.

When I was sworn into the National Guard, I took an oath to protect and defend the Constitution from all enemies foreign and domestic. Rep. Bentz took almost the identical oath.

I was a low-ranking enlisted soldier, and my adherence to the oath was never tested. Rep. Bentz, however, is one of 535 members of the House and Senate whose votes determine the direction of the country. He is an attorney and knows the value and meaning of laws and the seriousness of sworn oaths.

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At a time of Constitutional crisis not seen since the Civil War, Rep. Bentz has chosen loyalty to his political views over his oath to defend the Constitution.

Ken Chapman / Jacksonville

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