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Candidacy: Mayor

Name of Office: Mayor of Eugene

Candidate comm # or PAC #: 17466

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HIGHER ED
Please describe your views and position on funding or support for higher education, including, but not limited to, State funding, tuition rates, University accountability, etc..

The percentage of public funds supporting the University of Oregon has dropped dramatically in recent years. The resulting reliance on private support and steadily increasing tuition jeopardize the University’s mandate to provide an affordable public education to Oregon’s students. Additionally, these private funds are often earmarked for special projects or shift priorities based on available support, leaving valuable programs such as LERC without adequate budgets. As Mayor, I am an advocate for increasing the state funding to ensure that the University is able to fulfill its mandate both as a public university and as an affordable option for higher education.

Please describe your views and position on state transparency, especially in relation to University foundations that (are meant to) serve the interests of the State and its people.

Transparency in the source and use of public dollars is essential. At the same time, the increasing reliance on private support benefits programs that are able to attract private funding and increases pressure on programs to raise private dollars. We have seen this in the proposed cuts to LERC -- its value is measured in its capacity to fund itself rather than to provide valuable educational experiences. Without stronger state funding, this will not change. To the extent possible, however, the University should be held to the highest standard of accountability and transparency. Students, parents, alumni and
community members deserve to know the source of funding, and how and why funding decisions are made.

UNION RIGHTS
Do you support the rights of employees to collectively bargain?
As Mayor, I have stood clearly on the side of supporting the union’s ability to represent their membership in collective bargaining. I am committed to using my role as mayor to encourage both sides in bargaining to stay at the table and that is a role. I personally called President Schill to encourage resolution with the GTFF last month.

I grew up in a union family. My parents were both journalists and members of the Newspaper Guild. Twice in my childhood, my family coped with the impact of strikes. When the printers at The New York Times went on strike, my father, who worked on the editorial side, refused to cross the picket line. He was out of work once for about three months and the second time for close to six months.

Would you oppose efforts to eliminate or restrict the right of workers and their unions to represent all workers or use payroll-deduction for union dues, including publicly opposing ballot measures?
I am not in favor of reducing benefits for current or future employees. My starting assumption is that current benefits are essential to the well-being of employees and I would not be in favor of a reduction or an effort to balance the budget on the backs of employees. Proposed changes would be a key component of future bargaining and I would turn to the union to understand the implications and ramifications of any proposed adjustments.

How likely are you to publicly oppose measures, as indicated above, that are deemed to be hostile to organized labor?
I am fully committed both as a community member and as an elected official to opposing measures that are deemed to be hostile toward organized labor.

What are some of the ways you imagine pushing back on the continued effort to weaken Union strength (State legislation following Janus v. AFSCME; attempt to gut LERC; etc.,)?
The Janus v. AFSCME decision as well as the University of Oregon’s recent attempt to drastically reduce support for LERC were disappointing and undermined the value that unions have in our communities. I believe in the importance of organized labor to ensure safe, fair, consistent, predictable working conditions. The LERC program cuts and the recent GTFF negotiation process indicate a lack of respect by the University for the importance and value of unions. As an elected
official, I will champion all workers rights to collectively bargain and will speak out against efforts to weaken our unions.

LOCAL ISSUES
What is your position (and any plans) on addressing the Eugene/Springfield housing situation?
Eugene has a housing crisis. I know from my experience at ShelterCare that too many families in our community are a single medical bill or car repair away from homelessness. Increasing the availability and affordability of housing is a key concern of city council. As Mayor, I advocated for and passed the Construction Excise Tax, for the first time reaching across the divide between the business/development community and housing and neighborhood activists to create a housing trust fund to support the construction of more housing people can afford. I also championed the work of the Housing Tools and Strategies workshops to identify and recommend priorities within 80 possible tactics the city could target to remove barriers to building more housing. Looking forward, I am eager to see the construction of our new riverfront development which will contain new affordable and missing middle housing options for people as well as create a new opportunity for economic development. We are struggling to adapt to the challenges of growing from a large town into a small city. This is evidenced in the immediate struggles to adjust our neighborhood zoning, remove barriers in building Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and responding to the requirements of HB 2001 to open residential neighborhoods to more duplexes, fourplexes and apartment buildings. I will continue to advocate for the City to comply with the law and help remove barriers for ADUs and encourage the creation of more “missing middle” housing to address our housing crisis.

Our area has seen an uptick in “hate crimes” and related activities. How would you work towards addressing these issues?
I am committed to standing up to hate crimes in our community. As Mayor, I am proud to have chaired the Ad Hoc Committee on our sanctuary city ordinance and continue to champion the rights of our immigrant communities to be safe, welcomed and encouraged to be active members of our community. Further, for the first time, the city engaged an Equity Panel to engage communities of color who are not broadly or often represented in our policy discussions to reflect on climate impacts in their lives. Those conversations are a model and lead to broader conversations, not just about climate change, but about authentic and diverse representation.

How do you plan on addressing issues around poverty and homelessness in our area?
I took office in 2016 promising to work toward the creation of a permanent public shelter with the understanding that the city would partner closely with the county. My initial stakeholder meetings primed the county and city to commit to the shelter feasibility study and service assessment, now known as the TAC report. Those 10 recommendations, adopted by both the county board and city council, put us in a stronger partnership and shared investment than ever before to make strategic, targeted investments to help more people in our community stabilize their lives. I am committed to ensuring we fund the TAC report to bring those recommendations to fruition. We still have a lot of work to do on this front but I am committed to having those hard conversations about how we make progress toward our goal of reducing homelessness in Eugene.

CAMPAIGN QUESTIONS
Are there choices or decisions you have made in the past that we should be aware of in making our recommendation to support your candidacy?
As Mayor, I have put a strong emphasis on trying to combat hate crimes and protecting our workers in Eugene. Through the Kindness Campaign that I announced on November 3rd, I intend to shine a light on the communities within our community to increase a sense of belonging. Kindness is an action -- and one of our most important recent actions is engagement of the Equity Panel in our Climate Action Plan 2.0 to bring the concerns and priorities of communities of color and lower income residents into our resiliency planning. I am also committed to standing with workers. I supported the GTFF this fall with a personal call to President Schill to advocate for a fair resolution for workers -- my constituents -- who need to be able to pay their rent, raise their families, and be assured of health care.

What are your three primary goals while serving in this position, both short term and longer term?
I look forward to continuing the work I have begin in my first term. Climate change, housing, homelessness and equitable economic development are critical concerns. Emergency preparedness will continue to be a priority. Our fierce winter storms and vulnerability to wildfire require outreach to the community to learn to be prepared; and engagement with our neighboring jurisdictions to work together. Finally, I expect to incorporate the constructive dialogue, actions and framework of the Kindness Campaign to infuse all of my work to bring the community together.

How will those goals and your plans while in office benefit Higher Ed organized labor as well as the students we serve?
The University of Oregon brings undergraduates and graduate students, professors and staff from around the country and world to Eugene. Collectively, they represent an
abundant and diverse resource of talent, skills and perspectives. We can learn a lot from each other. As Mayor, I want to build a community that welcomes students and offers an economy and housing market that enables them to live and thrive. Together, the City and UAOU form a partnership that moves our entire city forward.

**Why did you decide to run for this position?**
I have decided to seek re-election because I want to continue to make progress on the issues that matter to me and to our city. We are poised to grow and prosper, but we also face deep challenges in climate change, homelessness, housing and social justice. I am eager to translate what I have learned in these first three years into greater progress in a second term.

**What other organizations are supporting your candidacy?**
Currently, my campaign is endorsed by several elected officials including former Mayor Kitty Piercy and Labor Commissioner Val Hoyle, as well as the Eugene Realtors Association.

**What is your plan to win your election?**
In order to win my election in May, my campaign has prepared and is executing a robust field, fundraising, endorsements and social media plan. We aim to raise between $90,000 and $100,000. Our goal is to knock 20,000 doors and donations will go toward staff, sending out direct mail, radio, digital and potentially TV ads as well as a Get Out the Vote Plan during the last leg of the race.

**What would UAOU’s endorsement mean to you?**
An endorsement from UAOU would reassure me of an ongoing partnership between the City and UAOU. I recognize the benefit that our City has from the University of Oregon by training the next generation and I am also committed to fairness in the workplace. I see a strong relationship of UAOU’s commitment to the University’s faculty, as my constituents and as contributors to our community through educating our students.