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Date received  
1/2/2020  

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., As a recent graduate from the UO, and having paid my own way through college by waiting tables, this issue is near and dear to my heart. It is absolutely crucial that our public universities not resort to tuition hikes to recoup increased operating expenses. With current tuition rates, it took me nine years to earn my degree because I could not afford to take a full course load each term; as the cost of tuition continues to rise, that path is put further and further out of reach and students are simultaneously forced to go into more and more debt in order to obtain a degree.  

I worked as a Legislative Aide in Salem during the 2019 legislative session and actively advocated for a higher budget appropriation to our public university system. It is crucial that increasing university costs not continue to fall on the backs of students and faculty and I admire UA’s efforts to shine a light on some of the excesses of the administration, such as exorbitant car allowance stipends. Staff cuts and tuition hikes should be the very last resort, which does not seem to be the current practice.  

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.
Charitable contributions can serve an important role in our public university system, especially when public funding becomes unreliable. However, we must be able to ensure that the dollars are actually being used in the interests of all and not just in service of a smaller subset of people. I believe the system we have right now is not transparent enough and that oversight and accountability are overly significant challenges as a direct result. With more specific expenditure information, and especially if it were publicly available, I believe we would have a more just system. This would not only make it easier to ensure accountability, I believe it would also have a positive impact on the behavior of these institutions. Often, the mere knowledge that one is being observed is enough to alter one’s actions.

That said, Eugene City Councilors have a limited ability to make an impact in this realm. One power they do have is the use of their Office as a bully pulpit; as a recent graduate of the UO, I am more than willing to put this power to use in service of students and faculty.

**UNION RIGHTS**

Do you support the right of employees to collectively bargain?
Absolutely. Collective action is the best counterweight to both corporations and public bureaucracies.

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?
Absolutely. I have a proven track record of working against anti-labor ballot measure campaigns and for pro-labor measures. From knocking doors in opposition to 2018’s Measure 103 (a backdoor attempt to prevent corporate tax increases) to working as field staff on the Measure 97 campaign in 2016, I have consistently gone to bat for the working class. Opposing efforts to slash union representation or use of payroll deduction would be in complete alignment with my ideals and past activism.

How likely are you to publicly oppose measures, as indicated above, that are deemed to be hostile to organized labor?
I am the son of a mailman and a teacher, both proud union members. I was raised with an inherent appreciation for all that had been won for us through organized labor. The health insurance on which we relied, the livable wages, the ability to have adequate family time, all of this shaped my childhood. Any threat to organized labor is a threat to the working class and I am certain to publicly oppose it.

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..)?
One of the best ways is to continue putting our Democratic supermajority in Salem to use. For example, we passed HB 2016 during the 2019 legislative session; this bill helps unions cope with the Janus decision by modifying the legal mechanics of how union dues may be collected,
among other things. However, the Oregon School Board Association actively lobbied against this bill and this was a perfect demonstration of the need for pro-labor elected officials at every level of government. A pro-labor OSBA would have meant one less organization and one less powerful lobbyist working against the bill. The fight is not only at the state level, but all over Oregon and LERC is another great example of this need.

Another way to fortify union strength is to look at items that are frequently on the table during bargaining and turn them into guarantees. Single-payer healthcare would perfectly illustrate this. Instead of health insurance being something that required union capital to secure in each contract, it would be taken off the bargaining table and free up the union to push for other items.

Ultimately, we need more elected officials who openly prioritize labor and working class interests and who can be counted on to do more than just talk.

LOCAL ISSUES
What is your position (and any plans) on addressing the Eugene/Springfield housing situation?
The housing crisis is at the core of why I decided to run for Eugene City Council. My partner and I were forced out of our home of several years because we could no longer afford the ever-rising rent. We searched, and we searched, and we searched, but there was just nothing available for us to move into. As the clock ticked down towards our move-out date and as we grew more and more desperate, we began chipping away at the list of basic amenities we desired in our next home. In the end, we were exceptionally lucky to find a beautiful apartment in a great community that we could afford, but many people in that situation are not so lucky. When we look at Eugene’s unhoused population and where they came from, they were predominantly local renters, like me and my partner, who were forced out of their homes.

I believe there is no better advocate for a community or issue than someone who has personally lived it. None of our current City Councilors, nor anyone else running for the Ward 8 seat, have an intimate perspective of the housing crisis; to them, it is more an academic question than a lived experience and they do not seem to feel the same level of urgency that comes from living through such an ordeal. I believe this has been a major factor in our failure to tackle the crisis and in the Council repeatedly kicking the ball down the road on things like accessory dwelling units, zoning reform, and modification of the city’s fee structure (to name but a few.) If Council’s decisions and actions on housing were placed on a spectrum of cautious versus urgent, they would very clearly skew towards cautious.

I am running for City Council to bring a sense of urgency to the table and to pick up the pace on implementing solutions. In my view, our current decision-makers are often paralyzed by a misguided desire for perfection and are overly risk-averse. I am someone who is comfortable pushing for urgent, progressive changes even when it means we might make a few mistakes along the way. No plan is perfect, but many plans can be made into iterative processes that can be tuned up as we move forward. I will not let the perfect be the enemy of the good.
A few specific housing solutions that I would love to discuss in further detail if granted an endorsement interview:

- Make it easier to build by:
  - reducing/waiving system development charges and other development fees for ADUs and certain forms of low-income and middle housing
  - removing parking requirements for new construction in certain zones
  - lowering the minimum lot size for permissible accessory dwelling units
  - reviewing and possibly altering time-intensive approval processes for new construction

- Make it easier to be housed by:
  - creating/increasing tenant supports like rent assistance, housing code compliance inspectors, consolidated rental application systems
  - regulating entities that subtract units from our local housing stock such as short-term rentals and real estate speculators
  - altering MUPTE criteria to incentivize housing for lower income levels
  - building awareness (and possibly incentivizing construction) of less conventional housing types like single-room-occupancy complexes and quadplexes, especially along major transit corridors

**Our area has seen an uptick in “hate crimes” and related activities. How would you work towards addressing these issues?**

This issue, too, is personal for me. I have been called derogatory slurs in the middle of the UO campus, of all places. During the last budget cycle I was proud to work with members of the Eugene Human Rights Commission, in partnership with Councilor Yeh, to create and fund a new “Multicultural Liaison” staff position in city government. We faced determined opposition from multiple other City Councilors but, in the end, we won out. This position is intended to establish a system of proactive outreach to local marginalized communities and to give them more of a voice in Eugene’s decision-making processes. As white supremacist and fascist groups ramp up their organizing in our area, the creation of this position is very timely.

The Eugene Human Rights Commission has conducted extensive community research and focus groups to build a list of priorities; the Multicultural Liaison was one item on the list, and the next is a multicultural center. I believe it is important to step back and listen when marginalized communities use their voice and to not insert or override them with my own perspective. In this case, the Human Rights Commission did an excellent job of gathering input and I plan to help push for the priorities they laid out.

Aside from bureaucratic roles, I believe that City Councilors also have symbolic roles as community leaders. I see it as part of their responsibility to be present and represent our values when out in the community. For example, when the Proud Boys held one of their rallies at a local overpass back in May, I showed up to the peaceful counter-protest across the street. It was disappointing that only one elected official was there with us and that he wasn’t even from
Eugene. I saw this as a missed opportunity for our elected leaders to walk the walk and viscerally demonstrate our values. More recently, Council struggled to pass a toothless resolution denouncing white supremacy and ultimately had to approve a watered-down version. As an activist, I live by my principles and I will continue to do so as a City Councilor.

**How do you plan on addressing issues around poverty and homelessness in our area?**

The TAC Report lays out ten detailed strategies for the city and county to address homelessness; if the strategies were followed to a tee, the report asserts that we could have no permanent unsheltered population in as few as three years. From my position on the Budget Committee, in multiple newspaper articles, and in my activism I have consistently argued for an increased commitment to these strategies but it has been an uphill battle. During the last round of budget talks I put forward a motion to fund the very beginning stages of these strategies, but the motion failed. Several months later, Council brought the same motion back with the same exact funding levels I had determined and they passed it as a package with a few other components. To me, this is a perfect example of the lack of urgency that has consistently been exhibited by Council and I cannot help but wonder how much more we would have accomplished before winter settled in if we had just moved those few months faster. As a millennial, as a renter, and as someone who has spent much of his adult life living paycheck to paycheck, this struggle is real to me and I believe I bring a level of commitment that is not currently present on Council.

**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?

I do not believe I have made any decisions that would negatively impact your willingness to endorse. There are several positive choices and decisions I made, such as actively campaigning against recent anti-labor ballot measures and for pro-labor ballot measures. I was also working to resolve the housing crisis long before I ever thought about running for office; I Co-founded the Springfield-Eugene Tenant Association to advocate on behalf of renters and to help them keep their homes. Again, I am a person of action and I believe my record speaks for itself.

What are your three primary goals while serving in this position, both short term and longer term?

My three primary goals are to work on resolving the homelessness and housing crises, mitigating Eugene’s impact on the climate, and restoring trust and faith in city government.

Housing: Instead of focusing on criminalizing unhoused people, I believe we need to engage with those who want help and create pathways to restoration that enable more folks to find their ways back into housing. Having worked in the criminal justice system, I know that fining and jailing hurts not only unhoused people, but also housed people as taxpayers pay for the
unending focus on criminalizing people who are destitute. In my role on the city's Budget Committee I have actively pushed for increased funding and support of the TAC Report strategies and a major factor in my decision to run for City Council was the reluctance of our current Councilors to take meaningful action.

Climate Action: We are running out of time to take action on climate change. With approximately ten years left until our climate fate is sealed, the City of Eugene can no longer drag its feet on solutions. Our local activist community has been pushing for accountability and recently won some important concessions, but there is still a long road ahead before we have a Climate Action Plan that will ensure we meet our carbon reduction goals. If elected, I will be the youngest person on Council by more than a decade and I will be more than two decades younger than the average age of our current Councilors; I believe climate change will have a direct and tangible bearing on my future and this perspective certainly impacts the policies for which I am willing to push.

Trust in Government: At this time, more and more people are showing a lack of trust in city government and that their voices are not being heard. I believe this can be turned around with hard work, accessible and open representation, and honest communication. If elected, I intend to put more effort into sincerely engaging with constituents and seeking input from folks that may not have the luxury of being able to show up and testify at a City Council meeting every other Monday evening. I believe our current Council is only hearing input from certain segments of the population and that this skews the decision-making process. Door-knocking outside of election season, regular coffee chats, and town halls and listening sessions in our actual neighborhoods are all tactics I plan to use to reach often-unheard voices.

How will those goals and your plans while in office benefit Higher Ed organized labor as well as the students we serve?

An increased commitment to solving the housing crisis will benefit everyone, but I believe it will provide disproportionate benefits to students and faculty who tend to be on the front lines of the crisis. Our perspectives are not currently represented on the Eugene City Council and this lack of representation has played out over and over in the votes that they take. From essentially banning accessory dwelling units, to outlawing single-room-occupancy development, to maintaining exclusionary zoning, there is a whole host of opportunities for us to make it easier to be housed and to build housing--- we just need the commitment to make it happen.

Why did you decide to run for this position?

As I mentioned above, my partner and I were forced out of our last home because of the ever-rising cost of rent. We know well that feeling of fear and desperation that comes when someone is forced to move in the current market and we fully appreciate how lucky we were that it worked out for us, but I know that many others are not so lucky. None of our current City Councilors have gone through this experience. If anything, the housing crisis is academic to them and while they may be sympathetic, they cannot fully understand how those affected by the crisis truly feel or the endless struggles we face. I have done what I can from the Budget
Committee and through our work at the Springfield-Eugene Tenant Association but I have come to the realization that we just need more leverage in this fight. And so, here I am.

**What other organizations are supporting your candidacy?**

I am honored to have received the endorsements of: 350 Eugene Climate Emergency PAC, Run For Something, the Eugene Association of Realtors, and Teamsters JointCouncil No. 37. I have also received a slew of individual endorsements including Kitty Piercy, Pete Sorenson, Jennifer Yeh, Rob Zako, and many more.

**What is your plan to win your election?**

I have been reaching out to the people and I know that direct voter contact is our path to victory. Canvassing is certainly the backbone of our campaign. I also tend to perform well in debates, forums, and other public events and we are working to maximize these opportunities. Finally, we are making effective use of social media to keep a day to day communication dynamic open between the voters and our campaign. We have calculated our win number to be 4,203 votes and our targeting will get us there with room to spare.

**What would UAUO's endorsement mean to you?**

Organized labor in all forms is our best remaining bulwark against total corporatocracy. As a Field Organizer for the Yes on 97 campaign in 2016, and in much of my activism, I have been on the front lines of this fight. Our campaign is all about standing up for the working class and a core piece of that is that I am the only candidate in Ward 8 that is actually a member of the working class. UA’s endorsement would further legitimize and reaffirm my argument that the priorities and perspectives we have laid out in our campaign are in the right place.