NAME - Leonard Stoehr

CANDIDACY - Incumbent - Running for re-election

Office - Springfield Ward 4

Candidate comm # or PAC # - Leonard for Springfield (#17809)

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Date received

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.,

I am a strong supporter of funding our state universities and community colleges. We’ve seen an ever shrinking slice of universities budgets come from state resources. Our state’s corporate tax rate is one of the smallest in the country. We shouldn’t balance our public universities budgets on the backs of workers and students when large corporations aren’t paying their fair share.

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.

One of the issues that concerns me is Oregon's public institutions have widely differing fees for public records requests. In a 2019 article in the Oregonian, Ginger McCall, Oregon public records advocate called on lawmakers to reduce fees for public records requests. I agree with that. It is my understanding that some of your members have had trouble with records requests to the university.

I believe that university foundations should disclose who their donors are because they wield an incredible amount of power on campus. Decisions affecting public institutions should be made in public meetings and hearings, not in secret meetings with influential donors.

UNION RIGHTS
Do you support the right of employees to collectively bargain?

Yes. As a union rep for Teamster’s local 206, I bargain a number of contracts. I’m a union man through and through.

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’m ready to stand with you against all attacks on worker’s ability to organize.

How likely are you to publicly oppose measures, as indicated above, that are deemed to be hostile to organized labor?

Very likely. I’m not shy about standing up for working people.

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..)?

I am very supportive of H.R.2474 - Protecting the Right to Organize Act of 2019, which is currently languishing in committee in the U.S. Senate. As a leader in my community I’ve been very supportive of LERC and helping workers to organize.

LOCAL ISSUES

What is your position (and any plans) on addressing the Eugene/Springfield housing Situation?

I believe there needs to be a multi-faceted approach to address the housing crisis. I’m proud that Springfield has a strong track record in allowing the construction of accessory dwelling units and has done its part in “green lighting” multi-unit housing. Springfield needs to participate in the intergovernmental housing policy board with Lane County and the City of Eugene. I’ve voted against the rezoning of patrician mobile home park, an action that is forcing nearly a hundred folks out of their homes, to date this is the single most egregious action that the city council has taken during my tenure. I would like Springfield to adopt additional renter protections, a housing policy code, encourage new multi-family housing, and explore a construction excise tax dedicated to affordable housing. With the passage of Measure 102, Springfield now has the ability to partner with a local non-profit that has been awarded LIHTC credits from the State and can ask voters for a bond to construct those units. I applaud our local Housing Authority, Homes for Good, for their construction of MLK commons, the first “housing first” project in the community which is also supportive housing. I’m excited about the possibility of a state rent assistance program HB4002, both for one-time-use funds to curb evictions, and on-going assistance to help those on low incomes, my goal is to have Springfield well positioned to make...
the most of those opportunities. No single approach will alleviate the housing crisis and we need to be all hands on deck to help.

Our area has seen an uptick in “hate crimes” and related activities. How would you work towards addressing these issues?
Springfield is the home of the infamous Jimmy Marr, a neo-nazi that has been actively organizing in this area. This is a problem we need to take seriously. One of the reasons we’ve seen an uptick in “hate crimes” is because very few cities actually have a mechanism to record such activity and track it. Eugene has led the way with the creation of a human rights commission and I believe Springfield should follow their lead. We need to do more to hire people of color at Springfield PD, and have a police force that represents the community they serve. I believe we should prosecute and investigate hate crimes.

How do you plan on addressing issues around poverty and homelessness in our area?
Homelessness is directly connected to the larger housing crisis. Most of the folks who are homeless in this area are workers who were formerly renters and were no-cause evicted or priced out of the current market. The first thing we need to do is be proactive in stopping evictions from happening in the first place. I’m excited that the Oregon legislature is considering additional funding for legal aid services, which is the front line for eviction prevention in this area. Additionally, the legislature is considering an additional $63 million in funding for behavioral health services. I applaud that, and hope to work with lane county to house behavioral health services in Springfield. Furthermore, Springfield needs to do it’s part to implement the TAC report, and I believe that we can specifically help by asking the voters for bond funding to build a low barrier shelter in Springfield. According to the intergovernmental housing policy board, Lane County has a deficit of 13,500 affordable housing units, it is our duty to champion the construction of new housing units wherever possible.

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’ve made it my business to fight for the public interest and stand up for workers. I’m not hiding anything.

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

First, to stop the destruction of existing low-income housing by developers in Springfield. The ideal is to create enough housing for everyone. By making it impossible for young workers to live here, we eat our own seed corn.
Second, to roll up the welcome mat for corporations who line up to use our labor and resources on the public dime. By handing international conglomerates a blank check in the form of tax breaks, we create a playing field that tilts away from our small and local businesses.

Third, to work with the school board to improve our schools by reducing class size and hiring more teachers.

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

By reducing corporate raids, we better the odds of good jobs that will stay in Springfield and not disappear at the end of the tax waivers.

By building new housing, we make Springfield more affordable for students and academics who would otherwise have to commute unsustainable distances.

By improving our schools, we increase the flow of educated students to the University system.

Why did you decide to run for this position?
I was recruited to run for this position four years ago by Julie Fahey and members of the LatinX community. I ran against Dave Ralston, a notorious racist on the council. With the encouragement of friends, I’ve decided to seek another term.

What other organizations are supporting your candidacy?
I’m supported by Joint Council of Teamsters No. 37, the Democratic Party of Lane County and the Lane Central Labor Chapter, AFL-CIO. I’m seeking the endorsements of other Labor groups and environmental non-profits and I’m in process with each of them at the time of this writing.

What is your plan to win your election?
I’m running a grassroots, people-powered campaign. We’re raising money to send a few mailers, we will be in the voters pamphlet, my campaign manager will help me spend money wisely to maximize advertising dollars. Primarily, we are going door to door to build a working class movement for change in Springfield.

What would UAUO’s endorsement mean to you?
I would be very proud to have the smart and talented folks at the university of Oregon supporting my campaign. I believe it sends a signal to the voters that I stand on the side of reason, and the faculty believes me to be a vehicle for positive change in Springfield.