

North Clackamas County Chamber of Commerce Candidate Endorsements for November 2014

As a business organization, when the North Clackamas Chamber of Commerce weighs who to endorse, it considers the needs and concerns of its members more than any political advantage that may come to the chamber or its board.

Among the factors weighed are relationship with the chamber, voting record on business issues, political acumen, and a consistent ability to avoid the extremes of either major party by working across the aisle.

These endorsements are advisory to our members, especially small business owners who work to serve their customers, supply jobs, make payrolls, and support the community. We hope as we question the candidates that we effectively represent the interests of our members.

Congressional District 5

Recommendation: Endorse Kurt Schrader

It has become a common refrain that people are unhappy with Congress and public schools, but love their local Congressional representative and neighborhood school. In these cases, familiarity breeds understanding and appreciation.

While Congress has a lower approval rating than your average bridge seller or journalist, Congressman Kurt Schrader has been able to remove himself from that daily traffic accident to show signs of leadership, something we find a dearth of at almost every level.

A veterinarian and small business leader, Kurt has become better at crossing the aisle and thus, has developed more leverage as a potential swing vote. With our endorsement, we hope he can build alliances to support District 5 and all of Oregon. The congressional caucus statewide has on average not been friendly to our issues.

This is a difficult race and a difficult choice for us. We know that challenger and county Commissioner Tootie Smith would be a solid voter for business issues.

State Senate District 20

Recommendation: Endorse Alan Olsen

Sen. Alan Olsen earns our endorsement based on his voting record on behalf of business. He is reliable and consistent in this area.

This is another difficult decision because we believe challenger Jamie Damon possesses some of the important traits we would like to see, including an ability to work effectively with others, including chambers across the county; mediate across factions, and a remarkable desire to know and understand each community, its leaders, and its issues.

State Senate District 26

Recommendation: Endorse Chuck Thomsen

If only all our candidates could have the kind of work ethic, approachability and sensitivity to business issues as Senator Chuck Thomsen. Ubiquitous across his vast service area, Chuck wears out his truck traversing counties, chambers, cities, and school districts. Very supportive of constituents, Chuck is the real deal and we can't imagine not having a pear every time the chamber stops by his office.

House District 39

Recommendation: Endorse Bill Kennemer

Incumbent Rep. Bill Kennemer is running for re-election, but has no opposition. If only to affirm, the chamber nevertheless endorses Bill for all of the factors we seek in a candidate. He works across the aisle, is stalwart on business issues, and remains a good friend to the chamber and its members.

House District 40

Recommendation: None

Considering all the factors that prompt the chamber to make an endorsement, we cannot find reason to make an endorsement in District 40.

Incumbent Rep. Brent Barton has a consistently low voting record for business. For the most part, this is why we can't offer our support. This is a smart, ambitious politician. We believe he could earn the chamber's endorsement some day, but so far, we are waiting to see a shift in his record.

Challenger Steve Newgard remains someone who knows the district well, but will need to continue his development of political and policy understanding before he can be seen as a viable challenger in this district.

House District 41

Recommendation: None

Neither Democrat Kathleen Taylor nor Republican Timothy McMenamin made themselves available for interview.

House District 48

Recommendation: None

In Oregon House District 48, incumbent Jeff Reardon is challenged by George Yellott. Again, as with others, we are disappointed in Rep. Reardon's voting record on business matters. It is no better than others we have chosen not to endorse. However, we believe Reardon has earned our respect and a growing trust through ongoing dialogue, a softening on a complicated inclusionary zoning proposal that would hurt area businesses, and his leadership and dogged determination to support workforce investment and career technical education. His direct relationships in the manufacturing community have brought connections that should lead to improve training for high school and college students interested in the trades.

House District 51

Recommendation: Endorse Jodi Bailey

We would like to see incumbent Shemia Fagan be more willing to buck her caucus and work across the aisle. With her legal savvy, hard work, and deep commitment to her constituent base, she could develop into a leader instead of a follower for her district. While she can point to a specific incident where she has responded to a business constituent's concern, her extremely poor voting record on business issues tells a different story and has a much deeper impact on chamber members as a whole.

We see potential in challenger Jodi Bailey, and therefore she earns our endorsement. She could be a rare breath of fresh air for business interests in North Clackamas County. Her business and job-growth values will be put to the test in Salem, but we believe she has the character and judgment to learn and develop into an advocate for this community.

County Clerk

Recommendation: Endorse David Robinson

The County Clerk race is very important and deserves the attention of chamber members. We wholeheartedly give our support to David Robinson, who will bring the strategic planning skills needed to turn around the office. This is an office that needs top-level public communications and relationships development to restore trust. David Robinson will bring an effective personality, problem solving expertise, discipline, regulation and personal connections.

Incumbent Sherry Hall has been a good-hearted public servant. If she is re-elected we hope she will take the time to examine the stature and status of her responsibilities and take steps to restore faith in her and her office.