

Editorial

BrainstormNW 2008 Election Endorsements

President

John McCain, Republican

When Fred Thompson was asked recently why he ran for president, he answered that last year at this time he thought John McCain was politically finished. Thompson said that he'd made the mistake of underestimating McCain, and then he added, "You should never underestimate John McCain."

Throughout his political career, McCain has been underestimated by his political opponents. He wasn't expected to challenge W for the nomination in 2000, but he did. Last year when almost no one was agreeing with him, he made his now-famous statement that he'd rather lose an election than lose a war. His reward for his support of the Surge a year ago was to register at 9 percent in Republican opinion polls, behind Giuliani, Thompson and Romney. Despite beating the odds and winning the nomination — and being right about the Surge — most experts gave him little chance in the general election. But here he is again, in a race too close to call. Do you notice a pattern?

The rap against a McCain presidency goes something like this:

1) He's too old.

Our response: With age comes experience, the lack of which is his opponent's Achilles' heel.

2) Finance and economics are not McCain's forte.

Our response: Nor are they Barack Obama's forte, who has pledged to raise taxes and government spending by many billions. In *this* economy?

3) McCain is a neo-conservative and would continue Bush's foreign policies.

Our response: He is undoubtedly prepared, knowledgeable, and offers a consistent policy other foreign leaders can rely upon. Obama believes in talk and diplomacy, yet he has shifted through his campaign to a McCain-lite foreign policy that is now borderline incoherent.

McCain offers hints at his possible cabinet including Joe Lieberman, Carly Fiorina, Mitt Romney, Tom Ridge, and other credible possibilities. Obama's cabinet choices are anybody's guess and some people's worst nightmares. Critics have noted that Obama lacks "friends."

McCain has heard his critics before, often even within his own party, but he has stood his ground. We think the next president of the United States will need the experience to

know when and how to stand his ground. Underestimate him, and you'd be making a mistake — just ask Fred Thompson.

United States Senate
Gordon Smith, Republican

Republican Gordon Smith is running for a third term to the U.S. Senate against challenger Democrat Speaker of the Oregon House Jeff Merkley. This is not a close call. There is no comparison in stature between the two candidates, and not re-electing Smith would be a loss to Oregon.

Yes, we know the rap sheet on Smith. He called President Bush a criminal, he was against the Surge and lived to brag about it, and he's been a wimp on conservative issues. Skipping past his "base" crimes, there is another matter to consider when casting your vote this year for U.S. Senate: Gordon Smith has talent. That's one of the reasons he has managed to survive as the only Republican senator on the Left Coast.

If Gordon Smith wins a third term this year we expect two things to happen. He will, as Bob Packwood believes, have responsibility thrust upon him as he climbs the seniority ladder of the Senate's Finance Committee, the body's most powerful committee. And once re-elected, we believe he will re-establish his conservative bearings. In the future, Gordon Smith may never be a firebrand conservative, but he will be truer to his philosophical core.

Forgive us for being dismissive, but his opponent Jeff Merkley is a lightweight. He's a candidate whose only real chance of winning would be in a year where voters are disdainful of the current administration. Voting for Jeff Merkley because voters are mad at President Bush is *not* a good reason for Oregon to lose the talent of Gordon Smith.

Oregon Secretary of State
Rick Dancer, Republican

State Sen. Kate Brown is the handpicked candidate of Oregon's public employees unions. Because of monolithic union support in the spring primary, she beat two far better candidates, state Senators Vicki Walker and Rick Metsger.

Brown is running to replace the two-term occupant of the job, Bill Bradbury. Bradbury has politicized the position, via redistricting and cherry-picking ballot signatures, beyond what former occupants of the position, say Mark Hatfield, Tom McCall or Betty Roberts, would have dreamed possible. The whole Secretary of State's office is a mess — a real skunk in the state capitol.

Meanwhile, former Eugene newscaster Rick Dancer is a fresh face to politics. At times his campaign has exposed a rookie candidate. Nevertheless, the office needs fresh air and Oregonians need to break the stranglehold between the public employees unions and the Secretary of State's office.

Oregon Treasurer Allen Alley, Republican

This race is a close call between two interesting candidates, Ben Westlund and Allen Alley, who both have had a suspect relationship with Oregon conservatives. Strangely enough, both have dabbled at times, when they found it politically expedient, in both political parties — almost as if Benedict Arnold were running against, well, Benedict Arnold.

After serving four terms as a Republican from Central Oregon in the Oregon House of Representatives, Westlund ran again as a Republican in 2004 and won the area's senate seat. Two years later he made noise threatening to run for governor as an Independent. When the flirtation was over, he found himself in the midst of the Democrats' senate caucus. Now, Westlund seeks the treasurer's office, likely as a stepping stone to the governor's office.

Allen Alley, the Republican nominee, decided in the winter of 2007 to leave his private sector position as CEO of the Wilsonville-based high-tech company Pixelworks to become Gov. Kulongoski's deputy chief of staff. At the time Pixelworks' stock price had been devastated by overseas competition. As Kulongoski's deputy chief of staff, Alley hoped to bring fresh thinking to the governor's office. For our readers, Alley is best remembered as the governor's apparatchik who assembled the governor's council of economic advisors and threatened the economists not to talk to the press. It seems the governor was furious about comments the economists made in a June 2007 *BrainstormNW* mid-year economic report. Chairman of the Council Ralph Shaw resigned rather than be threatened by the governor and his staff.

That said, housekeeping accomplished, Oregon's most important industry is high-tech. It is an industry that has not as yet taken a leadership position in civic affairs in Oregon. An industry that represents possibly as much as 25 percent of the state's total domestic output needs a bigger role, which is why Alley's candidacy, as an engineer and high-tech leader, is conceptually a good thing.

Oregon 1st Congressional District No Endorsement

Hard to believe that a general election could pass where we wouldn't endorse Cong. Wu's opponent, especially since Wu is held in such a low opinion by the Oregon delegation. However, Joel Haugen has renounced the Republican nomination he won in the spring and is running as an Independent. We take him at his word.

**Oregon 2nd Congressional District
Greg Walden, Republican**

This might be the last chance that voters in Oregon's 2nd District get to vote for four-term Cong. Greg Walden. In 2010, after two decades of gubernatorial mismanagement, Walden may be making plans to become Oregon's first effective governor in decades.

**Oregon 3rd Congressional District
Delia Lopez, Republican**

Incumbent Earl Blumenauer will, as usual, win this election easily. We know this, even though Blumenauer believes in putting his utopian bike agenda over commerce. His opponent Delia Lopez says on her website that she believes the founding fathers spoke to her in her dreams. Both these candidates are living in a dream world. We'll go with the founding fathers.

**Oregon 4th Congressional District
Peter DeFazio, Democrat**

The Democrat, and former *BrainstormNW* columnist, is running unopposed.

**Oregon 5th Congressional District
No endorsement**

In this election cycle, unfortunately, this district has gone to the dogs.

**Washington State Gubernatorial Race
Dino Rossi**

Yes, it is true that Gov. Christine Gregoire has elevated the business climate in Washington State so that *Forbes* ranks the "Evergreen State" the fourth best place in the nation to do business. Yes, it's true that Gregoire far outperforms her Democrat counterpart to the south, Gov. Ted Kulongoski, mostly because she is by intellectual temperament a globalist, and not, like our governor, a provincial union hack. Nevertheless, we are endorsing her opponent, mostly because we are still sore about how Gregoire assumed office four years ago. As we wrote in 2005, "Rossi, who won the election in the first count and also won in the second count, and who carried 31 of 39 of the state's counties, eventually lost the third count, the manual recount." Even though we know we are supposed to "let it go," that still sticks in our craw. And Rossi is a terrific candidate for Washingtonians.

Ballot Measure Endorsements

M-56 – NO

M-57 – NO

M-58 – YES

M-59 – YES
M-60 – YES
M-61 – YES
M-62 – YES
M-63 – YES
M-64 – YES
M-65 – NO

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