

I. In Focus This Week

Checking in with Oregon Secretary of State Kate Brown

Dedication, talent and creativity of staff never ceases to amaze Brown

How would you assess your first six (almost 7) months in office?

I am working hard to deliver on the commitments I made to Oregonians when I ran for this office: Initiative Reform, Voter Engagement and Performance Auditing.

Oregon is one of the most active and least regulated of the 24 states with some form of direct democracy. When I ran for this office, I heard time and again, all across the state, that Oregonians were concerned with the fraud and abuse surrounding our initiative process. The focus of my work has been on regulation and enforcement of the initiative system.

I was able to pass legislation this session to give the Secretary of State more tools to fight fraud in the signature gathering phase of the initiative process. By working with the legislature collaboratively, we secured the resources to hire additional investigators to “police the initiative process” on the streets and enforce our election laws.

Signature verification will also be done in the SOS Elections Division (instead of at the county level) providing greater uniformity and efficiency.

Has anything about the job surprised you?

The dedication, talent and creativity of the 200 employees that work for the Secretary of State's office never ceases to amaze me. Many people are critical of state government. I have been astounded at the level of heart and soul these state workers put into their jobs!

What's your favorite part about being Secretary of State?

The Secretary of State in Oregon is our Lieutenant Governor, and is the head of four program divisions providing service to the public: Archives, Audits, Corporation and Elections. The Secretary of State also sits on the State Land Board and oversees the Common School Fund along with the governor and State Treasurer, the two other constitutional officers.

What I enjoy is that these issues are so diverse, challenging and impact Oregonians in their everyday lives. I'm committed to being in every one of Oregon's 36 counties every year, so I am delighted to travel the state and meet Oregonians from all walks of life. I also am meeting the county elections officials on their home turf, something they tell me has not been done by previous secretaries of state.

Is there anything you dislike/find difficult about the job?

Oregon is a big state. We have counties that are bigger than some states. It's a good seven hour drive across the state from the Capitol in Salem. So if there's any downside, it's the sore butt I get sitting in the car for so long on my trips around the state.

How would you describe your relationship with the legislature and what's the status of the legislation?

I had the wonderful opportunity of serving in the Oregon Legislature for the past seventeen years, including nine as the Senate Caucus Leader. So, those relationships I built across with legislators on both sides of the aisle and around the state served me well during the 2009 session.

My staff and I continued to build on these relationships, meeting regularly with legislators about our budget and policy bills, responding the legislators' questions and concerns within forty eight hours and

being as transparent as possible in the budget process. Nearly all of my agency's bills passed, and in a session during the most dire of economic times, I consider that quite a feat.

Perhaps the most interesting dynamic for me was "being at the mercy of the Legislature" both in terms of our agency budget and policy. As some wise soul said to me, what goes around comes around. As a legislator, I did not have the sense of how powerful I was, at least in regards to others. Now I definitely have that sense.

You've experienced your first election since becoming Secretary of State, how did that go? What was the experience like?

My first election was extremely smooth, but voter turnout was low for this primary. Clearly, I have lots more work to do concerning continued voter participation! I won my first race by seven votes so I know firsthand that every vote matters. Now I need to communicate that to lots of Oregonians.

What's on your agenda for the next six months and moving forward after that?

We will be preparing for a 2010 legislative session. Normally the Oregon Legislature only meets every other year, but leadership in the last few years has been calling for annual sessions. My agenda includes passing legislation establishing a recreational management easement on Oregon's navigable waterways, chairing the Complete Count Committee for Oregon, campaign finance reform and reestablishing Oregon's Progress Board.

II. Election Reform News This Week

- A [Virginia board of elections task force](#) has proposed regulations that will make it easier for college students to register to vote where they go to school, but the panel disagreed on another aspect of defining a voter's residence. The task force wrapped up work on proposed regulations that could help guide local registrars in handling applications submitted by students who list their campus addresses as their voting residences. Registrars in college communities were flooded last year with student applications reporting their campus addresses as their permanent residences. Without clear state guidelines, registrars took differing approaches to the situation. The General Assembly passed legislation this year calling on the board of elections to clarify the regulations.
- Another state elections panel, this one in [Wisconsin, endorsed a five-year plan to study early and Internet voting](#), but not a requirement that voters show photo identification at the polls. The board that runs the state's elections said studying voter ID was outside the scope of the plan on conducting elections under the federal Help America Vote Act. They said that a photo ID requirement was a matter for the Legislature to resolve. The board's plan now goes to the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee for final action. The plan is needed to secure up to \$6 million in federal funds.
- The [Ashland County, Ohio BOE is continuing its battle against state budget cuts](#). With the two Republican members splitting their votes, the board voted 3-1 this week to have board of elections director Shannon Leininger and Democratic member Dave Samsel find outside legal counsel to fight the commissioners' latest \$17,392 reduction in the board's 2009 appropriations. The commissioners have cut \$1.2 million in 2009 general fund appropriations in two rounds of cuts as part of their attempt to balance the county's operating budget.
- In Tennessee, [Sullivan County has decided against hiring an attorney to fight the state in the battle over voting machines](#). Election officials decided this they don't need to file a lawsuit seeking to block the state's paper ballots law from going into effect. Instead they're leaving the job of solving a bureaucratic quagmire created by the Tennessee Voter Confidence Act up to the very state officials who set it in motion last year. "The onus is on them to perform and not us," Election Commission Chairman James Holmes said as he discussed the situation at the commission's

Tuesday meeting. At issue is whether the county – or anyone else for that matter – can buy a set of voting machines that meet the federal government’s top standards in time for the November 2010 election as required by the Tennessee Voter Confidence Act.

III. Research and Report Summaries

electionline provides brief summaries of recent research and reports in the field of election administration. Please e-mail links to research to sgreene@pewtrusts.org.

[Electronic Voting Technology Workshop/Workshop on Trustworthy Elections](#) – USENIX/ACCURATE Electronic Voting Technology Workshop (EVT) and IAVoSS Workshop on Trustworthy Elections (WOTE), August 10-11, 2009: A two-day workshop about voting technology held earlier this week brought together researchers from a variety of disciplines including computer scientists, political scientists, legal experts, election administrators and voting system vendors. A number of [papers](#) were presented on topics such as usability, forensics, security and audits.

[Registering Military and Overseas Citizens to Vote](#) – Adam Skaggs, Brennan Center for Justice at New York University of Law, July 2009: Problems that prevent military and overseas citizens from voting are found to often stem from states’ voter registration systems and their inability to handle a highly mobile population far from home. This leads to these voters being registered at significantly lower levels than other Americans. The Brennan center recommends addressing this problem by modernizing the voter registration system to automatically register voters based on data maintained by the Department of Defense’s Defense Manpower Data Center.

[Automatic Registration in the United States: The Selective Service Example](#) - Laura Seago, Brennan Center for Justice at New York University of Law, July 2009: This brief analyzes the Selective Service’s registration system for the 16.5 million men aged 18-25 and how it might be a useful model for modernizing states’ voter registration systems. The Selective Service’s experience systems is described and the report finds that it demonstrates that automatic voter registration is feasible and that the government agencies that could be involved in improving voter rolls already have the infrastructure, technology and experience to do so.

[Democracy in a Mobile America](#) - Scott Novakowski, Demos, July 24, 2009: The United States is a highly mobile society and Demos finds that people of color, people with low income and the young are more likely to move than others. These groups are also the least likely to register to vote or cast ballots. Additionally, the home foreclosure crisis may have increased the numbers of unregistered voters. Demos recommends a shift to automatic registration, proper implementation of public-agency based voter registration, enforcement of federal fail-safe voting provisions and a move to same-day registration.

IV. Opinion

Florida: [Hillsborough County](#)

Mississippi: [Voter ID, II](#)

North Carolina: [Forsyth County](#)

Ohio: [Number of elections](#); [Secretary of State race](#)

South Carolina: [Richland County](#)

Tennessee: [Voting machines, II](#)

***some sites require registration*

V. Job Opportunities

All job listings must be received by 12 p.m. Eastern on Wednesday for publication in our Thursday newsletter. Job listings are free but may be edited for length. Whenever possible, include Internet information. Please email job postings to mmoretti@electionline.org

Elections Director, Pinal County Government, Florence, Ariz.-- this is a Department Head/Administrative Officer position that works under policy direction and will manage a major department of the organization. The following are examples of some of the duties for this Position: Confers with political party chairs; coordinates department staff activities; prepares and conducts municipal, school district and special district elections for which the County is contracted; plans and recommends for Board approval the establishment for new voting precincts, supervisor districts and Justice of the Peace Precincts; plans, directs and controls the preparation and conduct of elections for which the County has responsibility; prepares bid specifications of election services and equipment; recruits, assigns and trains election board workers; assists in legal actions relevant to elections; develops and administers voter education programs; researches, prepares and submits voter changes to the Voting Rights Section of the Justice Department; selects, trains, supervises and evaluates staff.

To qualify you must have a Bachelors Degree and three years increasingly responsible, elections management experience, including two years in a supervisory or administrative capacity. Interested candidates should apply by going to www.pinaljobs.com and submitting an online application. **Salary** range for this position is \$76,252.80 - \$105,248.00 DOE.