

If Your Pro-Chiropractic Governor Resigned, Would You Be Prepared?

Vern Saboe Jr., DC, DACAN, FICC, DABFP

John Kitzhaber, MD, recently re-elected to a historic fourth term as Oregon governor, has [resigned](#) among alleged ethics violations by his fiancée' and first lady, Cylvia Hayes. I developed a personal friendship with John and consider him a good friend. I didn't know him prior to 2010, but as the profession's lobbyist during the 2009 gubernatorial race, I made it my business to know him. You should make it *your* business to know the political figures in your state - established and up-and-coming - so you can lobby for chiropractic and plant the seeds of political success.

Dr. Kitzhaber was the clear lead horse in the governor's race, and I found out he was extremely supportive of the chiropractic profession. The Oregon Chiropractic Association (OCA) supported him; we rallied the troops to go to events, host events and write checks for his campaign.

For example, my longtime good friend and colleague, Dr. Dan Beeson, hosted a wonderful event at his beautiful home in Lake Oswego, Ore., raising \$20,000 for the governor. We repeated these activities more recently during his run for an unprecedented fourth term. Dr. Beeson again stepped up and held another event at his home, this time raising \$35,000.

Governor Kitzhaber did more for the chiropractic profession than any governor in the state's history. But the question all my colleagues are asking is, what are we going to do now?

New Governor - Another Old Friend to Chiropractic

Fortunately, with the recent swearing in of Secretary of State [Kate Brown](#) as governor, the profession has an even closer friend in the governor's chair. I have known Kate Brown since 2001. When she first ran for secretary of state in 2008, I rallied the troops to support her because she was the lead horse and likely winner. My wife and I held a beautiful function at our private home for Kate; another at our favorite local restaurant at \$500 per plate; and Dr. Beeson held a function at his private golf club that was also a huge success.

As lobbyist and friend, I paid to attend almost every event held for her leading up to the election. We did the same in her run for re-election as secretary of state in 2013. In the fall of 2013, at the Oregon Summit, a big Democratic event held every other year in Sunriver, Ore., I arrived at the ballroom 45 minutes early (which I always do) and found a seat up front near the speaker's podium. I do this because the legislators and other VIPs tend to show up early to check out the room, find where their table is located, etc.

Sure enough, that morning, here came my good friend Kate Brown with Ellen Rosenblum, the Oregon attorney general, in tow. When Kate arrived, there were 10-12 individuals sitting around my general area; a few were legislators, including the Senate Democratic majority leader. After she greeted me and gave me a hug, Kate turned to everyone and said, "This man is a big part of why I got elected." It was, in a word, *priceless!*

About two months ago, before the current brouhaha regarding now-ex-Governor Kitzhaber ensued,

Kate asked me to lunch in my hometown to catch up and talk about the profession's current issues. We did so and had a few laughs in the process. About a month ago, she called again to tell me how much she appreciated my wife, Jeri, and me being so supportive over the years; and that party leaders were instructing her to start getting busy raising funds. I immediately said, "Of course!" to her request to donate \$500 to her Kate Brown Committee.

My point, dear colleagues, is that Kate Brown was very high on a short list of the likely successors for John Kitzhaber once he finished his fourth term. Turns out that came sooner than expected, but we were prepared.

Know the Lead Candidates - and Make Sure They Know You

- Determine who the "lead horse" is in your district, meaning the candidate most likely to win the primary and general elections.
- Get behind that likely winner very early and during the primary, because once that candidate wins their primary and their party holds a strong voter registration edge, everyone (including your enemies) will be scrambling to show support. Make sure you're already there!
- Offer to serve on the "lead horse" candidate's campaign committee, often referred to as a "kitchen cabinet committee" because of folks gathering to talk strategy at that candidate's home kitchen table.
- Donate early and often - and get your colleagues to do so as well. Even though it may be a roll of the dice to get involved so early, I assure you candidates remember those early checks.
- Ensure you are included in canvassing the district neighborhoods for your candidate or legislator vying for re-election. This sends a powerful message of support to that candidate or returning legislator. They know full well you could be playing golf, boating, hiking, or doing whatever you choose on a bright, sunny Saturday - but you chose to walk door to door for them instead.
- Write letters to the editor of your local newspaper supporting your candidate or returning legislator; and forward a copy of what you have written to them.
- Make sure to attend as many fund-raisers for your candidate or returning legislator (given by other individuals or groups) as humanly possible. It will have a positive effect.
- The most powerful thing you can do is to host a function in your private home. Something happens to transform people when you open your private home for them to raise funds for their campaign. They will remember these events, especially if given when they first run. Our current state representative's wife, Pam, recently mentioned the beautiful function we gave for her husband 10 years ago!

On Feb. 19, during our Chiropractic Day at the state Capitol, even though just sworn in as Oregon's new governor, Kate Brown took time to come up to the third floor, find the OCA's base of operations to say hello, and give me a hug. It was a nice gesture, but my point is, forward-thinking, grassroots efforts have put us in an even better place for the next (nearly) four years. We as a profession will most assuredly be there for Governor Brown to ensure her re-election in 2018.

Looking forward, being proactive and pre-emptive is vital to political success in your state as well. Always make sure you consider the future and who the likely lead horses will be in your state. Show your support and they will return that support. It's well-worth the effort.

MAY 2015