


As major party lines blur Independent/3rd party candidates becoming more viable

A less obvious yet not too subtle consequence of the Occupy movement is an increased awareness of how little difference there is between how the major parties vote on social and economic legislation. Republicans and Democrats both appear to ascribe to the same “pro business” deregulation policies and tax inequality tenets that helped create the [massive wealth gap that began with the Reagan administration](#).

...The incomes of the wealthiest 1 percent have nearly  tripled since 1979. Everyone else? Not so much.

The chart on the right sets the scene. The after-tax incomes of the middle class (the 21st to 80th percentiles) have grown at about 1 percent per year since 1979, adjusting for inflation. The incomes of the wealthies 1 percent, meanwhile, have zoomed upward at a considerably faster pace.

Party lines have blurred around the globe and in the UK the Occupy London Stock Exchange protesters lament the fact that there is no longer any difference between the Houses of Commons and Lords as evidenced by the austerity measures enacted to avoid raising corporate income taxes. In many ways Coos County acts as a microcosm of national and even global issues and we see the same movement towards austerity and privatization of public resources here as we are seeing in Ireland and Greece.

A local democrat, Representative Arnie Roblan has announced his intention to run for State Senate to fill a seat to be

vacated by Joanne Verger also a democrat. Both Verger and Roblan may as well be republicans as they vote with that side of the aisle frequently and the local chamber of commerce has bragged how both, along with their GOP counterparts Jeff Kruse and Wayne Krieger voted in line with chamber interests 100% of the time. Considering the chamber only represents a few dozen businesses in Coos County and our local representatives' legislative record hasn't stopped school weeks from shortening or unemployment rates from rising, or environmental degradation or the privatization of public assets it is really hard to tell what the difference is between Arnie Roblan and any other republican.

The two party system is old and tired and either polarizes constituents into favoring an ideology over common sense or, in an effort to meet in the middle renders both parties benign and impotent. If ever there was a time to run third party candidates it is now. We desperately need some out of the box thinkers not manipulated by shadowy groups like ALEC and self serving influence peddlers like the Koch brothers.