

What Shall We Give In Return For Receiving So Much?

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Secretary of State

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The motto for my administration is taken from the Latin phrase Pro Tanto Quid Retribuamus, which translated means: “What shall we give in return for receiving so much?”

From day one, my leadership team and I were developing plans and strategies to bring Oregon to a place where accountability, transparency, and integrity are the norm, not the exception. While there will always be bumps in the road, our goal to create a world class Secretary of State’s office that leads by example has not wavered. We also adopted the theme from our nation’s Pledge of Allegiance to promote “liberty and justice for all” Oregonians. As my administration approaches the year and a half point in our tenure, I want to share with you our successes and some of the challenges we face. I consider us all one Oregon family and feel a deep responsibility to keep you informed. Therefore, please read this entire newsletter, as I have some personal news to share with you as well.

Here's what we have accomplished during the past year and a half—beginning with key audits we have conducted.

As Oregon's Secretary of State and as a former foster parent, it hurts my heart to see the deplorable conditions revealed in our recent audit report on Oregon's child welfare system. These are the most vulnerable children.

I take seriously the responsibility to ensure Oregon's aging and disabled populations receive proper care. These are our brothers, sisters, parents and grandparents.

I am angered at the crushing failure of many Oregon public schools to do their jobs and prepare our students for life. They are the future.

In addition to the above audits, I have attached a list of the many accomplishments this office has achieved. This work is an example of what good government looks like and what can be done when politicians hold their constituents' futures as their guiding force instead of their own. I hope this information also reinforces the faith and trust you placed in me to keep my promises and always do the right thing for Oregon.

You, the people of Oregon, are the centerpiece of our mission, vision, and values and are the reason for everything we do. In the past year and a half, we have conducted 50 audits of state agencies. Some confirmed the great work being done, while others uncovered extremely disturbing failures. Three of the most egregious findings were:

- The Oregon Health Authority Automated Medicaid eligibility audit found that thousands who were ineligible to receiving benefits had not been removed from the system, costing tens of millions of dollars. In addition to the audit, the Audits Division produces a first of its kind "Auditor Alert" that won an Excellence in Accountability Award from the National State Auditors Association. The audit and the Auditor Alert pressed OHA to complete eligibility reexaminations and remove the thousands of ineligible recipients from the system. The agency also promised to make other changes recommended in the audit.

- The Department of Human Services audit on Oregon's aging and disabled population found that this extremely vulnerable population was not receiving adequate in-home care. This audit helped to motivate the creation of legislation to strengthen training and standards for home care workers.
- The Department of Human Services Child Welfare System audit uncovered that chronic management failures and high caseloads were jeopardizing the safety of many of the state's most vulnerable children. The impact of this audit was so significant, Governor Kate Brown requested \$14.5 million to hire nearly 200 new caseworkers.

Please check out our [complete list of audit reports](#).

We can never foresee all the twists and turns in the road we will travel whether in public service, in business, or in life. However, we here at the Secretary of State's office can be certain that in the coming years we will not shrink from our duties: we will have spirited debates with the legislature over budget matters; we will take on more tough audits that uncover problems, make recommendations on "best practices," and encourage our state agencies to do better; and we will continue to promote integrity in our elections keeping Oregon as a national leader in elections cybersecurity. In short, we continue to implement Oregon government with a commitment to accountability, transparency, and integrity, all the while seeking the very best results for each of you.

On a more personal note, there is another challenge to be faced that was not expected. This challenge will be my responsibility, however, I will lean on my team and my family.

In May, I was diagnosed and began treatment for a small, cancerous brain tumor. While this was a difficult diagnosis to hear, I'm blessed and optimistic. We caught it early. I have a treatment plan in place, and I have an exceptional support system here at work and at home. I am taking on this challenge the same way I've taken on every challenge since my days flying "Night Hawk" as a combat helicopter pilot—I've considered my options, set my goal, developed my plan, and failure is not an option.

I am excited to continue serving along with my incredible team of 219 professionals. You have elected me as your Secretary of State, and you can count on me and my Administrative team, Audits Division, Corporations Division, Elections Division, and the State Archives to always provide the same outstanding service.

In addition to serving Oregon, it is wonderful to be able to serve in another positive and meaningful way. This is an opportunity to advocate for all who are living with and fighting cancer along with their loved ones.

No one is promised tomorrow, so please use my situation as a reminder to be kinder, more patient, and more loving to each other. And, if by God's grace we all live long, thriving lives, let's live them with purpose. That's my plan.

I'll keep you posted.

 Secretary Richardson Signature

P.S. I'll be hosting a [Facebook live](#) event today at noon to address a few questions.

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