

MALHEUR COUNTY SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Pursuant to Initiative Measure No. 23-64
Meet to Promote Relocating Oregon-Idaho Border Ordinance
September 14, 2026

The Special Meeting of the County Court was called to order by Judge Dan Joyce at 9:00 a.m. with Commissioner Ron Jacobs present. Commissioner Jim Mendiola was absent. The Special Meeting was held pursuant to Initiative Measure 23-64 and Malheur County Meet to Promote Relocating Oregon-Idaho Border Ordinance to discuss how to promote the interests of Malheur County in any negotiations regarding the relocation of the Oregon-Idaho border. Judge Joyce led the Pledge of Allegiance. Members of the media, public and staff were able to attend the meeting in person or electronically. Present in the meeting room was Bob Wheatley; present electronically were Greater Idaho Movement Executive Director Matt McCaw and County Economic and Community Development Coordinator Taylor Rembowski. Notice of the meeting was posted on the County website, the Courthouse bulletin board, and emailed to the Argus Observer and all persons who requested notice. The agenda is recorded as instrument # 2026-3073

Judge Joyce opened the meeting and called on Mr. Wheatley for comments.

Bob Wheatley: I had a couple of things that I just wanted to mention to you as kind of an update. And then I had a little discussion that I really had hoped for, I had hoped to be here at the last meeting and it would have been a good time for that discussion, but it's still timely and we'll get into that in a little bit, but kind of addresses what's happening here with these meetings. But first of all, just as kind of a reminder, I went through the minutes from the last meeting, read through it, and it's kind of the discussion we seem to keep coming back to, the same discussions as far as to what the Greater Idaho group as such should be doing. And I'm not an official person other than being Malheur County's what they call a captain for the group. But my role here is to just try and encourage people to think about what's going on in the state of Oregon, what's happening politically and what this movement can or can't do. And we keep having the same discussion as to the Greater Idaho group doesn't seem to be coming forward with any answers to the questions that have come up since this movement began. And as we all know, and we've had lists of questions and we've gone over them before in the past as to what the goals would have to be, how certain items would have to be addressed in order for the movement to actually move the border would have to take place. What would have to be done. And realistically, we have gone to the point where we now know that the many counties in eastern and southern Oregon, the voters have voted that they would like to discuss the issue of moving the border. They have indicated their unhappiness with what is happening politically in the state of Oregon and how the decisions that are made in the Oregon legislature, in the Oregon governor's office and basically by the western part of the state, impact those of us who live in the eastern and southern part of Oregon and on a political basis. And basically, what we're finding, and as you well know, we on the eastern part of Oregon are outvoted every time that there's an issue that comes up. And that makes sense; most of the population base is on the western side of Oregon and in primarily certain areas. The Portland area seems to dominate the discussions, Salem and Eugene also in that corridor, where the impact

is the greatest when it comes to voting on the issues. And a lot of the issues that are favored on that side of the state are having a negative impact on those of us who live in eastern Oregon, especially our farmers and ranchers. On the other side of the coin, we have a number of people still in eastern Oregon who have always been Oregonians, and they want to continue to be Oregonians. They're not happy with the situation politically and would like to see something done there, but they don't know quite what to do, but they do know they want to continue to be Oregonians. So, the question that comes up in my mind is how do we address that?

Before I go into that, I would like to do a little summation on some of the issues that politically have come up and how they're impacting us. One of the first things that I think we have to think about is the impact of the state's green energy policies and the impact they have on especially our farmers and ranchers, all of eastern Oregon and southern Oregon are basically agriculture-based industries. Right? And if our farmers and ranchers do well, the rest of the population does well. If they don't do well, the rest of us are going to hurt as well. So, we need to keep an eye on these things and follow these issues because they are having an impact on us.

Several years ago, when Kate Brown was still governor of Oregon, we had a movement to advance the green energy issues and they put forth a number of issues in the legislature that would impact how these issues would be addressed. And they would have a negative impact on most all of us. The issues that they have put forth and have passed in the legislature have come to address the greenhouse gas emissions. We also have had issues with the governor, the new governor, Kotek, and her legislative cohorts would like to see us do away with the four lower Snake River dams, which would again impact our power and the effect that that would have on us. They have addressed and passed climate protection programs that again would affect how supplies of diesel, gasoline, natural gas and propane, as well as other gas emitting industries are impacted throughout the state of Oregon, but especially in our agricultural impacts. There have been movements to impact and eliminate the use of diesel fossil fuels in the state of Oregon. And we realize how that would impact not only our farmers and ranchers, but the distribution of goods throughout the state of Oregon. Many of the issues that the legislature has addressed on this issue would at the very least impact us by raising the costs of electricity. There would be impact as far as eventually raising the impact of the cost of oil and gas.

This Spring, we had a positive example of what the voters can do when they are stimulated. When the new gas tax was tried to pass, be forced through the legislature, and let's admit, it was a forcible act that was tried to be done by the legislature and especially by the governor. But the voters did rise up, and it was an overall rise in the voters. All of the state of Oregon by overwhelming majority voted to knock down that gas tax, and that was kept from being put into place. And if we think the price of gas is high now with what has been happening throughout the world politically, imagine what it would be for Oregonians, we'd be in the same class as they are in California.

Another item that has come before us and has been talked about as on the negative side of moving the border and becoming a part of Idaho, seems to always come up, is that Idaho has a sales tax and Oregon does not have a sales tax. But if we look into that, and the Greater Idaho group has

looked into that, we do have a sales tax in Oregon. It's just not called the sales tax. It's called Oregon's corporate activity tax, or better known as CAT. And essentially what has happened is that the legislature put into effect a few years ago, a tax on the retailers in the state of Oregon, and how that affects us is direct, although in an underseen manner. It works by causing, first of all, there's a tax on the manufacturers of goods that is passed along to the purchasers. There's a tax on the distributors. There's a tax on the retailers. And all of these taxes are passed on to the eventual consumer, the buyer. So, in effect, we have a sales tax in effect. And the Greater Idaho movement has looked into the effects and comparisons of what consumers in Oregon are paying compared to what consumers in Idaho are paying. And even with the sales tax, it is quite equitable. So, in our minds, that is not a real factor.

It's also been discussed that in Idaho, there's a big difference in the wages that are paid. Again, studies have been done and have compared the wages paid in Oregon versus Idaho. And we can see that being right here on the border, we can see that, certainly the minimum wage in Idaho is lower than what the minimum wage in Oregon is. But if you look at the competitive wage being paid in Oregon compared to Idaho, it is very equitable. Let's face it, especially those of us who live on the border of Idaho, all those counties who have a border with Idaho in Oregon are paying a competitive wage with Idaho. We have a lack of people looking for jobs, apparently, because there are job openings throughout the area and the wages that are being offered are equitable and are above what that minimum wage would be. So again, we find that a questionable impact.

But I think one of the biggest things that I'd like to also offer up, and we have discussed this lightly in the past, but I want to go back to 2022. And there was a study that was done. And the Greater Idaho group did publish this. There was a poll that was conducted by Survey USA. And that is a top-rated pollster throughout the United States. And there was a poll conducted with voters in the Willamette Valley and along the Oregon north coast. And there were a number of issues that were addressed there. But the ones I would really like to remind the group about is that one of the questions asked is, if counties in eastern and southern Oregon vote to leave Oregon and become part of Idaho, do you think the state of Oregon should allow those counties to become part of Idaho or not allow those counties to become part of Idaho? And again, these were voters in Willamette Valley and in the western part of Oregon. In that poll, 16% were undecided, 46% were in favor of letting the border be moved, and 37% were opposed. I think that is an end. And I think if we conduct that same poll today, we would find similar votes.

The poll went a little bit deeper and it talked about the differences between Oregon and Idaho. And why would Idaho want to even have the border moved? Why would Idaho want to take us in? And brought up in that study and in similar studies, one of the reasons maybe Oregonians should let the border be moved is because the western side of the state is paying quite a bit of money in subsidizing eastern Oregon and southern Oregon. So, we can look at that again. We've got two sides of the coin there. First of all, maybe western Oregon should really consider letting us go because they could utilize that money that's been coming to us to finance their greater green agenda. There are other agendas that they are trying to forward that would have a negative impact on us, but are favorable to what their goals, how they see the state of Oregon becoming. Okay, so

if it makes sense for them to let us go, and if a majority of the voters over there that were polled think that it could be a good idea, then why would Idaho even want to consider taking us in? And Mike McCarter did look into that, came up with some ideas for us to consider. And, again, I should remind you again, the Greater Idaho group has not only been working on the Oregon side of this issue and working with the Oregon legislature, but they've also been heavily involved in meeting with and discussing the issues with the Idaho legislature. And the Idaho legislature has been very accepting of considering the idea. They have even proposed and passed legislation that would form a committee to meet with the Oregon legislature to discuss the issue.

And again, that is where we are at this point, is wanting to discuss the issue and the ins and outs of what has to be done. And I will just also mention at this time, by and large, we have reached the point that we know that there are a great number of counties that have voted to consider the issue. Those counties are in eastern and southern Oregon. And we have addressed and we have seen a number of issues that have to be looked at, defined. We have a number of questions of how does this have to happen, and we have come to the point where those answers can only come by and when the Oregon legislature and the Idaho legislature would come together and look at those issues and define what could and couldn't be done. Those are not questions that we as independent voters, if you will, can answer. They would involve the legislatures of the two states making decisions and moving those movements, those answers forward to. But let me tell you what Mike had to say when he looked at this issue and as to why Idaho might really want to consider us, the first thing and best reason that Idaho might want to take us in is that when you compare the average incomes, and this was based on 2019 numbers. So again, this would have to be looked at again. But I think those of us who live here on the border and interact quite heavily with Idaho, I think we would see some of these same numbers, so the same. What he found was that the average income in Idaho and in southern and eastern Oregon, and this has to do with Idaho's lower taxes and lower cost of regulations, that our counties in southern and eastern Oregon are more closely tied to Idaho and their numbers than they are to western Oregon and the numbers found there. So, the benefits to Idaho would be, first of all, moving the border would bring a great number of voters and population into Idaho that have the same economic values, the same economic numbers as Idaho, would have a favorable impact on Idaho's budget and on Idaho's tax revenues. So, on the one hand, we see the western side of Oregon benefiting from moving the border; they would have a favorable impact on the tax issues. And on the other hand, we see Idaho would also have a favorable tax impact by taking in our eastern Oregon boundaries.

All of these issues are interesting. I think they're interesting to those of us who see the benefits of moving the border. But as I have said before, this is not a total thing where we have 100% of the people in eastern Oregon and southern Oregon who want the border moved. Again, part of our design if we are to move forward is first of all, we need the Oregon legislature to come to acknowledge that there are reasons to look at the issue, that they would be willing to form a committee that would meet with a committee from the Idaho legislature to discuss what the movement's about, what the pros and cons are, to answer the questions as to what would need to happen for this movement to even move forward. And as part of that, the Greater Idaho organization would support a vote by the entire state of Oregon to see if the majority of voters

would even want to move ahead. If the voters in the total vote in the state of Oregon was to say, no, this is not something we want to have happen, then we would no longer be promoting, we would be looking at other ways to advance the answers to meet through the disaffection, if you will, that is happening in eastern Oregon.

And that was one of the things that I had, I was sorry that I didn't make it to the last meeting and that we would have maybe a little greater discretion because I wanted to discuss how we as a group having voted to have these meetings. First of all, is there a way, and I know we've had some discussion, but we need to seriously look at this issue, is there a way that we can free you as a commission up from having to have these automatic meetings three times a year? Is there a way we can move it to where it can be done on an as needed type of basis as things move forward? We have, and the Greater Oregon organization, to my knowledge at this point, has come to the awareness that we know that there is a desire for a change. We have put forth some ideas on how one way would be to make change by moving the border, but we are at the point where it is up to the Oregon legislature to make a positive movement at this point. And truthfully, that is where the effort is being made by the Greater Idaho group at this time is to work within the Oregon legislature and also to continue working with the Idaho legislature to try and get those two groups together. And the truth of the matter is the Oregon legislature will not move forward. Any propositions that have been put forward in the Oregon legislature the last two sessions, bills have been proposed, and those bills have been sat on and never even met for committee discussion. So that is where the block is right now. The issues that we need to do is how do we affect that a change there to move forward there. If we were to get those bills moved out of committee and move forward to a vote by the House and by the Senate in Oregon, in order to do that, we have to have the voters in eastern and southern Oregon and even western Oregon. Those voters have shown that they might be inclined to see something done. We need to impact the legislature and we need to have that impact done by the voters.

The next part of what I have to say is me personally speaking as a voter and as a member of Malheur County. One of the things that I have seen happen and what I would like to have discussed and have some people come forth with ideas is how can we in Malheur County, how can we have an impact on the voters to favorably get out and vote for those issues that we can directly identify as having impact on Malheur County. What are the issues that you as commissioners and as judge, that are representing the voters of Malheur County? When you see issues that need to be addressed and need help in the legislature and impacting legislature or in voting positively on issues that would be positive for Malheur County. How can we help you as voters to make that impact and get that vote out? In the Primary this last spring for the vote on who would be running for governor this fall in Oregon, in the Primary, the Greater Idaho group had a series of meetings with all those candidates, Republican candidates, who were running in the Primary to represent the Republican party in Oregon and run for governor. And one of the interesting things that I listened to all those discussions, was favorably impressed with a number of candidates. In the end of the Primary, Christine Drazen was chosen by the Republican voters to be the Republican candidate for governor. One of the comments that she made, and she had a number of good ideas, I think, that were asked, questions that were asked by Matt McCaw at that time on ideas on how she felt she

could address this difference between the eastern and western sides of the state. Things that she could see happening that would be positives to draw us together as Oregonians. And one of the important things that she said was that Oregonians, especially Republicans, have to get out the vote, and one of the things, the numbers that she, a couple of numbers she brought out. First of all, and I found this hard to believe, but, the numbers are available, in the registered voters in the state of Oregon, only 32% of the registered voters in Oregon are registered as Democrats. How can that be? And yet we get out voted. And that's, first of all, is because that vote is concentrated in a geographic area of the state. And the other thing about it is they get out the vote. In the last election in which we had the same two candidates, Christine Drazen against Governor Kotek, candidate Drazen lost that vote by 66,000 votes. When you think about that statewide, 66,000 votes isn't very many. The important thing that she found is that there were 126,000 registered Republicans who did not vote. She lost by 66,000. 126,000 didn't even vote. So, my question is, how do we get the vote out? How do we get that 126,000 people throughout the state of Oregon, those Republican people, to vote? Maybe we don't have to move the border, maybe we just need to get the vote out, but how do we work together to do that? I would really like some ideas. Maybe we can use these discussions to find ways to address that question. What can we do to help Malheur County to better help you as the commissioners with your framework and with the issues that you address as being important? In my own mind, I had questions as to how locked in you are on what we can discuss and can't discuss in these meetings. I don't know whether you need some legal advice as to what our boundaries are on those discussions. That would be something that I'm sure we would need to address. We would need, again, a greater turnout for these discussions or at least have people forward ideas on what we could do to maybe draw together and produce ideas that are favorable to all of us who live in Malheur County. There are a lot of issues that I know we can come together on. It's just a matter of addressing them, identifying them, and getting together and do it.

So, I'm sorry I've dominated this, but since I'm the only one here, I've kind of wanted to get these issues out there, but that really concludes the remarks I had wanted to make, things that I wanted us to think about, and I hope that for those who may be listening in today, for those who will be reading the minutes of the meeting, and I encourage everyone to go to the minutes afterwards and read over what's been discussed and feel like you can offer your ideas on the discussion. I also would encourage each person who is interested in the discussion to go to the website for the Greater Idaho Move the Border group. It's greateridaho.org and there are a lot of interesting, there's a lot of interesting information there. There are a lot of studies that the group has done that answer some of the questions that people have and it also offers up a forum for those who have a negative idea about moving the border, but who would like to see positive movements on how we can come together, it gives a forum for those both pro and con. And so, I would encourage that. I really would like us to go forward from this point and have less confrontation and have more togetherness on the issues and what we can do to do move forward positively and represent the voters in Malheur County. I thank you for your time.

Commissioner Jacobs and Judge Joyce: Thank you.

Commissioner Jacobs: I think what I'll do is wait to comment on some of your questions and things after we hear from everybody else. I appreciate your thoughts and all the issues that you brought up because I think a lot of people, you know, haven't thought of those issues and the more we discuss this, the more we can bring those issues up and can come to a consensus one way or the other of, you know, how we view those issues. I'll wait to see if we have more comments.

Commissioner Jacobs: Mr. McCaw, were you going to take any time today?

Matt McCaw: Yeah, that would be great, commissioners. I was just going to give you, and thank you, Bob, I think you covered, you know, a lot of what I was going to talk about. I did just want to add, you know, kind of where we're at, at this point, and with these meetings, and with the movement, and what's happening, and Bob touched on a lot of those things. But at this point, this movement's been going on for six years, and Malheur County was one of our earliest counties where voters passed a measure and said, we want to look into moving the border, that was back in 2021.

In 2024 voters reiterated that they wanted to continue this discussion when they shot down the measure to end the meetings. So, for six years, we've been working, going to the people across eastern Oregon, asking them if they want to move the border or look into moving the border. They've been telling us yes. And we've been working with the Idaho and Oregon legislature, like Bob said. It's become clear to our organization after six years, and after getting, you know, when we started our own, we had to, you know, get our own representatives and senators in eastern Oregon and elected leaders to get on board and act. They have done that at this point. They've gone to the Oregon legislature. There have been bills introduced. The Oregon legislature has completely ignored everything that our representatives that represent the people of eastern Oregon representing what the people of eastern Oregon want. The Oregon legislature has made clear that they're not interested what we want and that they're not going to move this forward. So, in that space, we have an election coming up, we have a governorship, but you know, maybe there's hope for the people of eastern Oregon that the person that they elect for governor could become a governor, but the legislature is still not going to change. The legislature is overwhelmingly Democrat. It's going to stay that way. They have, you know, made the system so that it's going to be very, very difficult for eastern Oregon, the Republicans that eastern Oregon tends to vote for would ever be in charge of the legislature in the near future. So again, where does that leave us? Well, where that leaves us is that we have an understanding that we are a political minority, that the political majority is not willing to listen to or have any interest in what we want at all. And so where do we go from here? Well, we know Idaho is responsive to us and would be willing to have the discussion with us about adding eastern Oregonians. We know the Oregon legislature has basically shut down the entire topic and said, we're not going to do that. So, we have appealed at this point to the federal government and we've asked the federal government to create an office of state border transition and sovereignty. Because when you have a situation like ours where we have a political minority whose own government won't listen to us, won't respect what we want, we need an outside arbiter. And that's exactly what the federal government is there for. So, and just so you guys know, this is a topic that is taking off all over the country. So, we kind of were

one of the first to go to voters and say, hey, you know, like, you're this rural conservative population that's dominated by a faraway urban population that has no, like, whose values are completely similar to yours? How would you like to join your neighboring red state that does have values similar to yours? And that is happening all over the country now. There's movements, active movements in Illinois, in Virginia, in Maryland, New Mexico, rural conservative people across the U.S. are starting to do the same thing we're doing and saying, why are we letting this population of people that lives hundreds of miles away from us with a radically different culture and value set than us dictate our way of life. We are Americans and we have self-determined the right of self-determination. So, we're asking the federal government to create an office that would look at our situation out here in eastern Oregon, but would look at that at all these situations across the United States and become an arbiter and step in and say, okay, state of Oregon, we send you billions, tens of billions of dollars in federal dollars. But you are oppressing your own people in eastern Oregon and not listening to them. Let's sit down and let the federal government arbiter the situation. So that's what we've requested of the Trump administration. That's what we've requested of federal Representative Bentz is to advocate for us on that behalf. So Representative Bentz has not been willing to do that. Representative Bentz has not been willing to sit down and meet with our group. I think we've had this discussion before. We need Representative Bentz as our federal representative to be advocating for the people. So, the whole Greater Idaho movement really comes down to advocating for what the people of eastern Oregon want. And that's what we've been trying to do for six years. We've gone to people, we've asked them, they've told us now our job is to go advocate for what they've said they want to have happen. And we've seen that happen, that advocacy work at the elected, at the local level, you guys have written letters to our legislators, we've seen that work at the legislative level, where our legislators who were not on board at first have been responsive to what the people of eastern Oregon have asked and have brought forward bills and signed on to bills, asking the legislature to move this forward. Now we need that at the federal level, we need federal Representative Bentz to get involved. And that is what we're asking of our county commissioners now. You guys at the county commission level, your ability to advocate is only so much. But one way that you can advocate is you can ask Representative Bentz to get involved, advocate at the federal level. We have a request into the federal administration to create this office. We need our federal representative to get involved and advocate for us. You know, it's interesting, Representative Bentz had an eastern Oregon kind of swing and economic summit and he posted this list, he handed out this sheet. I'm sure some of you were present at some of these town halls or economic summits and it had like 27 different reasons why Oregon is struggling. But when you look at those 27 reasons Oregon is struggling, they're almost all state level issues. They're almost all issues that are imposed at the state level. And so, even Representative Bentz understands that the problems in eastern Oregon stem from the fact that our state government does not understand our way of life, does not appreciate our way of life, and is not interested in our way of life. Federal Representative Bentz cannot change what the Oregon State Legislature does, but he can advocate for us moving our border and changing the state line so that we can become part of Idaho, which would fix nearly all of those issues that are on the 27. So, our Jefferson County commissioners just wrote a letter a couple of weeks ago, an official letter to Representative Bentz reminding him that the voters of Jefferson County voted to explore moving the border. We would ask you guys at the Malheur County Court to do the same official

letter, asking Representative Bentz to get involved, advocate for the people of eastern Oregon, and get the federal administration involved because the state of Oregon we don't believe is going to. So that's pretty much my ask of you and my brief update on what's happening with the movement. I would be happy to chip in and answer any questions. Bob brought up a lot of topics and I can answer some of those questions if you guys have them that I can chip in, but I will see the rest of my time and wait for questions.

Commissioner Jacobs and Judge Joyce: Thank you.

Judge Joyce asked for additional comments from the public; there were none at this time.

Commissioner Jacobs: I'd like to make some comments about what Bob talked about. I fully recognize that the regulations that Oregon imposes on the entire state, but we recognize them more in eastern Oregon, partly because they affect us so much, especially the farming and ranching community, which we rely totally on for our support here in the county. And we've even got Idaho Power that's pulling out of Oregon because of the regulations that Oregon is imposing on them. So, we're going to be dealing with a new electric provider and those issues are pretty tough for our ranchers and our farmers partly because we have so much irrigation here and pumping out of the Snake or even pumping to run their pivots and everything that has been so prevalent in the last few years. So, all the things that you mentioned, we really recognize and we understand that agriculture is the lifeblood of our county. And the regulations that are being imposed on us is making it so difficult for the farmers. We've had a number of farmers move across the border, take up residency over there. They're still farming in Oregon, but they recognize the regulations are just so strict in Oregon that they're not going to be able to turn their farm over to their children and people are not going to be able to have this lifestyle that we've all grown up with and basically love. So, we see the importance of trying to get a change in our legislation. And when you mentioned the fact that people need to get out and vote, I can't emphasize that enough. You know, we have the majority of Republicans in Oregon, and there's no reason that we couldn't vote more conservatively, like I think all of us in this room believe. But people need to understand what's going on not only in Oregon but throughout the world and we need to get out and vote and make sure that our voice is heard. The other thing about the legislators meeting together, you know, I know the bills that our representatives have introduced over at Salem, like you mentioned, don't even get to be heard. They won't even let them on the floor. So, we have a big challenge here in Oregon, and we need to recognize that we could change things if people would get out and vote. You mentioned the fact that you would like to see a vote to the entire state to see if they want to move the border, and I would like to see that myself. I would like to see that put on the ballot and be voted on to see what the majority of the people in Oregon desire as far as that's concerned. So, I have many of the same sentiments that you have about the entire issues. I also recognize that there are other complex issues that have to be resolved, and we can't resolve those. That has to go through the legislatures, Idaho and Oregon have to come up with an agreement on how they would do those things. But I would like to see the Oregon and Idaho legislatures get together and discuss this but like you mentioned they've tried and that hasn't been possible. I would be more than willing to talk to Representative Bentz and we will have to consider potentially sending a letter but, you know, I

don't see how anything's going to be able to change unless we did get some help from some arbitration through the federal government. So those issues that you brought up, those things that you discussed, I want you to know that I really appreciate those thoughts and sympathize and pretty much have the same sentiments that you have because we just haven't been able to get things passed in Salem that are beneficial to our rural Oregonians and of course we're in favor of that because we recognize the importance of way of life here. I want to thank you Bob for coming in and thank you Matt for your comments as well.

Judge Joyce: And I think the numbers that you brought up about the voters that don't vote is the key, the real key in this one, and it was in a previous election with the other candidate that lost in the Primary. He lost by 22,000 votes and there was 80,000 that did not turn out and so that's a real issue that's got to be addressed. There is one positive note that it's going to be on the ballot and that is putting a senator in every county in Oregon, but if nobody turns out to vote it won't make any difference, but if they turn out to vote it could, you know, because you got one, we have one senator right now that takes care of 10 counties. And that's 10 votes. So, I don't know how many times this has been brought up, but they finally got it. So, I think it's going to be on the 28th now, I think in our Eastern Oregon Counties meeting that came up the other day. So, to me, that's huge.

Mr. Wheatley: Yes, that is huge.

Judge Joyce: But to get people to go vote is, it's, well it's challenging for one thing. But to understand why is the other thing. Who knows?

Mr. Wheatley: I appreciate that. Great comments. I appreciate both of you.

Judge Joyce: And it's not like we haven't been working on that side of it, you know. Period, you know.

Mr. Wheatley: Understood. So maybe before the next meeting, I know we can't do anything before the election this year, but maybe before our next meeting January, if you could maybe get some clarification on things that we could discuss within this meeting and get people to come to the meeting so that they know that we're not just rehashing the same old thing that we've been talking, like Matt said, for six years, we need to look at some ways that we can come together and agree what things we can agree on and work together on to get more people involved. So that would be really great. I'd love to see that.

Judge Joyce asked for any further comments.

Mr. McCaw: You mentioned a vote to have a senator per county rather than one state senator. I'm assuming you mean at the state level for the state legislature and I have not heard, I mean I've heard people propose that question before, but as I understand, I was under the understanding that there's, you know, Supreme Court law that disallows that kind of representation. Can you just elaborate a little bit on what you were mentioning there?

Judge Joyce: Well, actually it came up from one of the state senators several times in the last couple of years. So that's where we first heard about it. So, and I actually think it was someone...

Mr. McCaw: That would be an attempt to put on the ballot to make each county be able to have one senator rather than the three senators that are currently covering all of eastern Oregon?

Judge Joyce: Yeah, it's true. And I actually believe it was one of the senators from central Oregon, the first time I heard it, that represents Jefferson County actually, or did.

Mr. McCaw: Interesting.

Judge Joyce: Yeah, but I've heard about it for several years.

Mr. McCaw: Well, yes, so have I, but there's been a Supreme Court case many, many years ago, like decades ago, Reynolds v. Sims, that required representation to be proportional rather than, you know, so that one senator covers about the same number of people on the east side of the state is on the west side of the state, which is how we got into this mess in the first place. And so, I was just curious if you had any insight about how this ballot measure would get around that or if the idea is to just directly challenge that.

Judge Joyce: I assume it would be to directly challenge it because it would only make, I believe there's 36 counties. So, there would only be 36 and what have we got - 30 now?

Mr. McCaw: Yes, we do have 30.

Judge Joyce: I've never heard about the Supreme Court challenge, but I'm sure that in the past, any law that could be made to overturn that too. But once again, you're back to getting the vote out no matter what you do.

Mr. McCaw: Well, and I, you know, I will just put my own two cents in on getting the vote out. I think that the best thing we can do, you know, just as a voter myself and as somebody who, before I got involved in Greater Idaho was not politically active at all. I think the best thing we can do is to deliver results when people do vote because there's nothing more, you know, depressing, disengaging as a voter than voting for something and then watching nothing happen on that issue, whether that's Greater Idaho or whether that's, you know, pick your topic. When you vote and you take the time and say, I'm going to go vote and engage in this, and then you see, okay, we won. For instance, people in Malheur County voted, have voted twice to say, we want to continue to have this advocacy for moving the border. If they don't see action that creates apathy. If voters vote for something and nothing happens, and they don't see anybody working for them, towards that end, that creates apathy. I think the best way we can, you know, as elected leaders, as leaders myself in a movement like this, the best way to get people engaged and get people to show up is to be advocating as hard as we can for when they do tell us what they want. So, I would encourage you, I appreciate Commissioner Jacobs, you saying you will talk to Representative Bentz. We'd

love to see a letter out of Malheur County. I think that is how we get people engaged when they see, look, we heard you and we are going to fight for what you want. When we're taking actions like that, it engages voters and helps drive turnout. Thank you, guys. I'm going to sign off, but I appreciate all that you guys do.

Commissioner Jacobs and Judge Joyce: Thank you.

There were no further comments from the public or Court. Commissioner Jacobs and Judge Joyce thanked Mr. Wheatley for attending the meeting and for his comments. Commissioner Jacobs moved to adjourn the meeting. Judge Joyce seconded and the motion passed.

Vote: RJ/DJ in favor. Approved.