



Bill Bradbury gets around on a Segway.

## Bradbury Segways To The Left In Governor's Race

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By Chris Lehman

PORTLAND – In the May Democratic primary for Oregon governor, Bill Bradbury has been running to the left. His chief opponent is an old friend: former governor John Kitzhaber, who says he wants to create what he calls a "new political center." Bradbury hopes Oregon's political landscape has changed since Kitzhaber was in office. But the former Secretary of State faces political challenges and some physical ones too.

Bill Bradbury knows that John Kitzhaber can round up votes. Kitzhaber won his last race for governor by the widest margin in decades. And that was during a time when Oregon voters were still putting Republicans in statewide office and electing GOP majorities in the legislature. Now, every statewide official in Oregon is a Democrat, and the party controls both chambers in Salem. Because of that shift, Bradbury thinks Kitzhaber has a weak spot.

Bill Bradbury: "I think it's a fundamental difference between old policies, old centrist policies, and someone who's very proud to be a Democrat and who very much wants to move the state forward based on those Democratic values."

Bradbury has run a campaign aimed squarely at liberal voters. He's come out strong against Liquefied Natural Gas. He's proposed a state-run bank that he says would lessen Oregon's dependence on large out-of-state financial institutions. And he says he'll push lawmakers to find an extra two billion dollars in the state budget for education. Bradbury says the money would come from scaled-back tax breaks, known as tax expenditures.

Bill Bradbury: "The legislature can clearly look at the tax expenditures and figure out a way to share the burden amongst all the taxpayers—business and personal."

When asked for an example of a tax break ripe for the picking, Bradbury cites something called the foreign corporation tax credit. It's a century-old tax break for companies that base some operations overseas. Take it off the books and you save the state about \$33 million per budget cycle. Bradbury insists there are many other tax breaks like that, and if he's elected, he would push lawmakers to find them. Bradbury is outgoing and easily works a crowd. Here, he poses for photos with a group of college students following a debate at the Portland City Club. Many in this crowd said they were torn between Bradbury and Kitzhaber, including Democrat Andrew Wheeler.

Andrew Wheeler: "I think they're both very well qualified. I won't say what I'm worried about with one of them."

But seconds later, Wheeler concedes that it's Bradbury he's worried about, even though he's leaning toward voting for him.

Andrew Wheeler: "I worry about his health but I think that he needs to have a chance."

That hesitation to discuss his health is one reason Bradbury decided to talk openly about his disability during the campaign. Bradbury has multiple sclerosis. He gets around these days on a Segway. The two-wheeled transporter played a starring role in Bradbury's first TV ad.

Bill Bradbury, speaking in TV ad: "When I had a hard time walking because of MS, I got this Segway. And with out state facing challenging times, I'm proposing solutions to get out economy rolling."

Bradbury figured he might as well bring his disability front and center, since everyone seemed to be talking about it...just not to him.

Bill Bradbury: "It's sort of like this simmering issue. That's just sort of like 'psst psst psst.' Just kind of whispering. And people—you know, it's very interesting at coffees and stuff that I go to, it's real touchy. They don't want to sort of raise the issue."

Bradbury says MS mainly affects his ability to get around. The National MS Society says symptoms of the illness vary dramatically among people who have it, and that the disease generally does not affect life expectancy. Bradbury's had MS for much of his political career, including his nine years as Secretary of State. In that role, Bradbury says he's proud of helping to implement Oregon's vote-by-mail system. But not everyone was a fan of his time as Secretary of State. Portland attorney Dan Meek has been involved in efforts to get left-leaning measures onto the ballot. Meek says Bradbury clamped down too hard.

Dan Meek: "Anything to make the initiative process more difficult, Bill Bradbury adopted. He did absolutely nothing to facilitate it. Zero, zip nothing. Everything he did made it more difficult."

Bradbury was also criticized for removing Ralph Nader from the Oregon presidential ballot in 2004, and for a redistricting plan he drew up following the 2000 census. Republicans called it overly partisan but it was later upheld by the Oregon Supreme Court. One person who has praised Bradbury's time as Secretary of State is his current opponent, John Kitzhaber. In fact, it was his old friend and ally who appointed Bradbury to that job in 1999. On the surface, anyway, the two appear to have maintained friendly relations despite a high-stakes campaign. [I'm Chris Lehman in Portland.]

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