

Oregon automatic voter registration bill advances

SALEM (AP) — An Oregon legislative committee has advanced a measure that would use driver's license records to automatically register people to vote.

The House Rules Committee approved the bill on Wednesday, sending it to a budget committee.

The measure is a top priority for Oregon Democratic leaders, who are using their expanded House and Senate majorities to quickly push through bills that were stymied in previous years.

Democratic Secretary of State Kate Brown, who proposed the bill, estimates about 300,000 eligible voters will be identified. They will be sent documents allowing them to opt out of registering or choose a political party. If they don't opt out, they'll get a ballot in the mail during the next election.

State experts estimate it will cost about \$800,000 to comply.

BIRTH: Father is a paramedic with Sisters fire department

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Sisters to St. Charles Medical Center in Bend, Brooke's water broke. Damon proposed they pull into the Bend fire station, but Brooke was fixated on getting to the hospital. After all, it was now less than 10 minutes away.

Moments later, Damon was dialing 9-1-1 and pulling into the closest parking lot.

"I thought it was silly," said Brooke, "but he saw the signs and knew we were pushing it."

When they parked next to Subway at the north end of Hwy. 97, Brooke was still in the front seat. The 9-1-1 operator had recommended that Damon prepare the back seat for delivery, assuring him that the fire department was on its way. But none of that ever came into play. By the time Damon shot around to Brooke's side of the car, the baby's head and shoulders were already visible. Damon finished delivering the baby himself, and tied off the umbilical cord with paramedic gloves.

Within minutes, the fire department arrived to assist, and drove them safely to the hospital.

Henley, an 8-pound, 1-ounce girl, arrived healthy and safe. She joins her three siblings, Brennan, 6; Mackenzie, 4; and Ainsley, 2.

Looking back, Brooke says, "I can't believe that was

us. It wasn't how we imagined. You'd think it's your worst nightmare, but it was awesome — and fast. And we have a healthy baby girl and she's wonderful. We feel like God's truly blessed us with four healthy kids, each with their own amazing, individual birth stories."

Despite many years as a firefighter and EMT, Damon had not previously delivered a baby on his own. He likes to call this experience his first field delivery.

"I'm blessed to have a husband who is a paramedic," said Brooke. "He wasn't freaking out. He was scary-calm through the whole thing."

In this, Brooke doesn't need to rely on her memory; she has the 9-1-1 recording to prove it.

Ever prepared, Damon had long before placed an obstetric kit in their van in case of just such an emergency. But for their flight to the hospital on Friday, they chose the other vehicle.

The couple has no immediate plans to part with their Chevy Tahoe-turned-delivery-wagon. In fact, Brooke says, "I think when Henley grows up, we'll say, 'This is the car you were born in. It's yours now.'"

CAMPGROUND: Neighbors seek to shape future of facility

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Wednesday, February 18, at 4 p.m. and at City Hall at 6 p.m.

There was discussion about the grant available that could fund part of the cost of the Clemens restroom building. The deadline to apply is April 1. Asson and Andrew Gorayeb, city manager, cautioned against rushing the process in order to meet the deadline. Councilor Womack suggested proceeding with the application. If the grant is awarded to the City but the decision is made to not proceed with the restroom construction at this time, the City can elect not to accept the grant.

In other business, Councilor David Asson reported he and Mayor Chris Frye have been working on writing the action items determined at the goal-setting workshop. Asson has completed the goals of economic development, affordable housing, and improving public outreach. He asked

for direction regarding connectivity and increasing the community and private-sector asset base.

Asson asked about the vetting process for hiring a new community development director. He wondered if it would be possible to form some sort of committee to vet the finalists before interviews take place. He suggested that establishing a vetting committee might be an appropriate action given the community's lack of trust in City actions.

Gorayeb will talk with City Attorney Steve Bryant and the City insurance providers regarding the legality and risk issues of such a committee. Womack suggested checking the City charter to see if there is anything about the council directing staff in hiring issues.

The closing date for applications for the community development director position is February 11, and as of February 5 two applications had been submitted.



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