

Merkley backs Iran nuclear deal

WASHINGTON (AP) — Oregon's Democratic Sen. Jeff Merkley on Sunday became the 31st senator to announce support for the Iran nuclear deal, as momentum builds behind the agreement the Obama administration and other world powers negotiated with Tehran.

Merkley's backing puts supporters within reach of the 34 votes required to uphold a presidential veto of a congressional resolution disapproving the agreement, which curbs Iran's nuclear program in exchange for billions of dollars in sanctions relief.

Republicans are unanimously against the deal. But

with an overwhelming number of Senate Democrats in favor, some have now begun aiming to amass 41 yes votes, which would allow them to kill the disapproval resolution outright in the Senate and protect Obama from having to use his veto pen.

A vote on the nuclear deal the U.S. and other world powers negotiated with Iran is scheduled for early September.

Merkley said that while he thinks the deal has "significant shortcomings," it is the best strategy to block Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

"Because of these

shortcomings, many have argued that the United States, instead of implementing the agreement, should withdraw from it, persuade our partners to set the agreement aside and work together to negotiate a better deal," Merkley said in a statement. "However, the prospects for this are slim. All of our partners ... believe that the current deal — in regard to its central goal of blocking Iran's pathways to a nuclear bomb — is sound. They have committed the good faith of their governments behind the agreement and intend to honor the deal as long as Iran does likewise, with or without the United States."

School rehires coach who lost job

By Austin Meek
The Register-Guard

EUGENE (AP) — The Springfield School District has rehired Bill Wagner as Springfield High School's girls basketball coach, less than three months after choosing not to renew his contract amid complaints from a parent.

Wagner was allowed to reapply for the job after agreeing to meet with an outside coaching consultant hired by the school district. A nine-person search committee recommended Wagner for the position following interviews with other candidates.

"I'm very appreciative of the support, not only from my current players, but all my ex-players — not only the girls I coached at Springfield, but kids I coached at North Eugene," said Wagner, who coached both boys and girls programs at North before taking the Springfield girls job in 2010.

In an interview with *The Register-Guard*, district Superintendent Susan Rieke-Smith didn't express regret about the initial decision not to renew Wagner's contract, saying it provided "an opportunity for us to take a pause and look across our system."

After receiving input from parents, community members and other coaches, Rieke-Smith decided Wagner could reapply if he agreed to participate in a training program that will be offered to coaches district-wide.

"If we offer that, in this case to Bill, would he access that?" Rieke-Smith said. "Yes, he did."

The district investigated Wagner last year after receiving a complaint from Saul

Patu, a former University of Oregon football player whose daughter played on the Springfield varsity team.

Patu accused Wagner of using language that was verbally abusive and culturally insensitive. Wagner was allowed to return after the district ruled that his conduct, while failing to meet expectations, did not constitute harassment. That decision was upheld following an appeal in May.



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