

Senate approves stalking legislation



SALEM (AP) — Oregon would be one of the majority of states that have outlawed "stalking" under a bill approved unanimously Wednesday by a Senate panel.

The measure endorsed by the Senate Judiciary Committee, SB 833, now goes to the full Senate and appears to have little or no opposition.

The measure is the result of a number of cases in which victims, usually women, have been regularly followed or contacted by people showing obsessive behavior toward them.

The bill says stalking would be defined as repeated and unwanted contact with someone "without legitimate purpose" that causes the victim to be apprehensive about his or her safety.

The bill is supported by the American Civil Liberties Union, associations of district attorneys and defense lawyers and the state Commission for Women.

About two dozen states have passed anti-stalking laws.

The bill allows a police officer to issue a protective order on the spot directing someone suspected of stalking to stop. The order would be reviewed within three business days by a court, which could extend the ban by issuing an order of its own.

Stalking would be a misdemeanor with maximum penalties of one year in jail and a \$2,500 fine under the bill. The same penalties would apply to violating protective orders.

A second conviction of any of those offenses would be a felony carrying up to five years in prison and a \$100,000 fine.

David Fidanque, executive director of the ACLU of Oregon, said the measure fits the organization's goal that the kind of activity that amounts to stalking is more narrowly worded than the conduct needed to obtain a protective order. This focuses the law on the effects of the conduct rather than on the behavior itself, he said.

Fidanque said it would be easier to prove intent in a case in which someone had violated a protective order than when no order had been issued.

Polk County District Attorney Fred Avera, representing the district attorneys association, said stalking is the kind of behavior for which it is difficult to draft a criminal law.

"Stalking is like pornography," Avera told the committee. "It's hard to define, but we know it when we see it."

The measure also authorizes victims to file civil lawsuits seeking protective orders and monetary damages against stalkers.

'Stalking is like pornography. It's hard to define, but we know it when we see it.'

— Fred Avera,
Polk County district attorney

Legislators fight over parking

WASHINGTON (AP) — Like two drivers ready to come to blows over a parking space at a jammed shopping center, Sen. John McCain and Rep. Peter DeFazio are mixing it up over free airport parking for Congress.

McCain, R-Ariz., said Wednesday that DeFazio's defense of the reserved, preferential spaces closest to the terminals here has inspired McCain to redouble his efforts to eliminate "separate but unequal treatment" of government officials.

"In contrast to you, apparently, I think it is desirable that the various special privileges and perquisites offered to members of Congress have come under intense scrutiny from the public and the media," McCain wrote in a pointed letter to DeFazio.

"If the benefits we receive cannot withstand the light of public debate, they deserve to be modified or eliminated."

DeFazio, D-Ore., said McCain has set his sights on an "imaginary perk" to try to deflect attention from last year's ethics probe into the senator's involvement in the savings and loan scandal.

"Here is a gentleman who has been up to his neck in savings and loan problems that cost American taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars. Now he is leading the fight against the egregious offense of congressional parking," DeFazio said in an interview.

McCain was not immediately available for a response Wednesday, but his spokesman returned fire at DeFazio.

Press secretary Scott Celley, who hails from Canby, Ore., said DeFazio "has placed himself in that rare status along with the spotted owl and Fidel Castro by his impassioned defense of the royal and pampered treatment of which a shrinking number of members of Congress think they deserve at the expense of the working people of this coun-

try."

DeFazio, who makes at least 25 round trips from Washington to Oregon annually, said his free parking spot is cheaper to the government than getting a travel reimbursement for a \$40 cab trip to the airport or forcing a staff member to drive him.

The controversy began in March when Rep. Dan Glickman, D-Kan., urged his colleagues to end the preferential parking for members of Congress, diplomats and Supreme Court justices at Washington National and Dulles airports.

DeFazio responded with a memo that said the limited flight schedule forces him to compress meetings and occasionally miss votes on the House floor.

"I suppose there are other options. I could travel home less like many senior members and lose touch with my district," he said.

DeFazio closed the memo with pointed sarcasm, saying, "Yep, it's a real abuse, a real perk, it's what's really wrong with Congress..."

"Try a real reform or give back \$30,000+ of your pay like I do if you want to make a statement," he said.

The \$30,000 was a reference to the money DeFazio and other members return to the Treasury each year from a congressional pay increase they opposed two years ago.

DeFazio followed up with a letter to McCain on April 22.

"I urge you to set an example, drive yourself to Dulles Airport, park in remote parking, pay for your own parking, don't take travel reimbursement, eschew the pay raise like I did. In short, get real."

McCain said he has not accepted the pay raise. He said he has been traveling to Arizona on a weekly basis for 10 years and has used the free parking, but wants to end the practice now.

Oregon breaks records with wet April

PORTLAND (AP) — If you thought it was exceptionally wet in April, even for Oregon, you're right.

In downtown Portland and at Portland International Airport, it was the wettest April on record.

Downtown, where records have been kept since the 1870s, 7.96 inches of rainfall broke the April record of 7.88 inches set in 1883.

At the airport, where the National Weather Service has had its official reporting station

since 1940, 5.26 inches of rain fell, easily breaking the old record of 4.72 inches set in 1955.

Above normal rainfall was reported at locations across Oregon.

In Eugene, 7.85 inches fell, 4.74 inches above normal. Salem had its fourth-wettest April on record with 5.64 inches. Normal April rainfall in Salem is 2.42 inches.

Other rainfall totals included: Pendleton — 1.85 inches, .81

inches above normal; Klamath Falls — 1.58 inches, .89 inches above normal; Medford — 1.83 inches, .67 inches above normal; and Astoria — 8.95 inches, 4.35 inches above normal.

The weather service says the 90-day outlook calls for above normal rainfall in Western Oregon and near-normal rainfall in Eastern Oregon.

The drenched April still left the Portland airport 3.46 inches below normal for the water year, which runs from Oct. 1 to Sept. 1.

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