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Kitzhaber likely to veto bill



SALEM (AP) — The first major showdown between Gov. John Kitzhaber and the Republican-led Legislature appears likely to happen over a bill headed for a House vote sometime this week.

The Democratic chief executive is not satisfied with a House committee's work on the Senate-passed workers' compensation bill.

Kitzhaber believes the measure leaned too far in the direction of business interests as it came from the Senate, and that the version before the House did not do enough to restore balance.

So he would veto the bill in its present form, a spokesman says.

Labor issues are perhaps the ones where the lines most clearly will be drawn between a Democratic governor and a Legislature with both houses under GOP control for the first time in 40 years.

Key Republicans in the workers' compensation debates say they mainly want to offset effects of court decisions they believe have eroded the accords reached in a major workers' compensation overhaul passed in 1990.

The unions say the Republicans are using that argument as an excuse to make numerous changes they long have wanted in the complex workers' compensation system.

The bill, SB369, passed the Senate over solid Democratic opposition.

Lawmakers can't override a veto unless someone breaks party ranks. It takes two-thirds votes, or 40 in the House and 20 in the Senate, to override a veto.

Republicans hold a 19-11 advantage in the Senate and 34-26 in the House.

Another bill that could set up a veto scenario is a public employee collective bargaining measure that might emerge in the coming week from the Senate Labor and Government Opera-

tions Committee.

Unions are waging a major battle to kill the bill, SB750. Kitzhaber is objecting to numerous provisions of the measure, which backers say is aimed at removing some obstacles to efficient management.

Here are other highlights of the Legislature's coming week and a summary of major developments in the past week:

SCHOOLS — The House passed and sent to the Senate a bill to make significant changes in the state's education reform law. The Senate Education Committee will begin hearings on the measure Tuesday.

DRUGS — A House Judiciary subcommittee opens hearings Tuesday on a bill to restore criminal penalties for possessing less than an ounce of marijuana.

LIQUOR — The House State and Federal Affairs subcommittee begins hearings Thursday on bills to eliminate the state monopoly on liquor sales.



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Interested parties should pick up an application packet, which includes a job description, at the ODE front desk in Suite 300 EMU or call 346-5511 for more information.

Completed applications must be returned to the ODE Board of Directors in the ODE office by 5:00 p.m., Friday, March 31, 1995. An individual will be selected by the Board on April 18, 1995.

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Crashes kill four Lebanon students

LEBANON (AP) — This small town mourned the deaths of five residents, four of them student-athletes at Lebanon Union High, in two unrelated auto accidents.

Bob Denbo, president of the Lebanon Ministerial Association, said the deaths "pretty much devastated a lot of folks in this town. Most of the kids were well-known and have brothers and sisters."

About 10,000 people live in Lebanon, where news of the deaths spread quickly among classmates and friends.

"It was like a double whammy," said Rick George, an assistant baseball coach at Lebanon High.

The two crashes occurred less than 12 hours apart.

The first occurred shortly before 11 p.m. Friday, when a car driven by Brett Robert Christenson, 16, veered into oncoming traffic about three miles northeast of Lebanon.

Christenson and a passenger, Matthew Graves, 15, and the driver of the other vehicle, Floyd Lee Goodenough, 38, died at the scene.

Two other passengers in Christenson's car, Andrea L. Rush, 14, of Lebanon and Melisa Alexander, 16, of Lacombe, were injured.

The second accident occurred shortly after 9:30 a.m. Saturday when a Ford Explorer driven by Kathryn Rebecca Weinman, 17, hit a patch of ice and slid into an oncoming pickup. Weinman and a schoolmate, Talia Nicole Ufford, 17, were killed.

A third girl in Weinman's car, Megan Rivera, 16, of Gypsum, Colo., was injured and taken to St. Charles Medical Center in Bend.

The driver of the pickup, Edward Norbert Beitel, 40, of Stayton, and his two sons, ages 7 and 12, were treated at St. Charles and released.

All of the victims wore seatbelts. Police said alcohol was not a factor in either crash.

"We have had tragedies before, but not involving this many kids," said Bonnie Webber, assistant principal at Lebanon Union High. "These two separate events have touched almost every corner of the school population."

The school district's crisis

team, made up of teachers, counselors and others in the community, met Sunday to discuss how they could help grieving students.

Throughout the town Saturday, teen-agers wept openly.

"We grew up with them. They're like a part of our lives," said Kari Nunn, a junior at Lebanon Union High School. "Four teen-agers in this town can't die and not have it affect everyone. It's such a small town."

Jerd Tapia, a senior at Lebanon High, said classmates were devastated.

"We just went to rent a video, and everybody was in there crying," he said.

Graves was on the varsity wrestling team at Lebanon High.

George coached Christenson in baseball. He said he and the other coaches had gathered all the high school teams together Saturday morning to help the other players cope with the boys' deaths. That's when news came of the second accident.

"It was pretty traumatic," he said. "Several boys on the team were pretty close to those girls."

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