

Today	Saturday	Sunday
		
High: 64 Low: 47 Precip: 60%	High: 72 Low: 51 Precip: 10%	High: 70 Low: 46 Precip: 30%

IN BRIEF

Measure would create lieutenant governor post

SALEM — Oregon voters could have another choice to make on election nights to come.

The House on Thursday approved a proposed ballot measure that would create the post of lieutenant governor. The bill, approved 41-15 without debate, now goes to the Senate.

If approved there, the measure to create what would become the state's second-highest office would be on the May 2006 primary election ballot.

The bill was sponsored by Rep. John Lim, a Gresham Republican who also has served eight years in the state Senate. Lim has long campaigned to create a lieutenant governor's office, which exists in every state except Oregon, Arizona and Wyoming.

Lim said the measure would make the lieutenant governor the state's director of international trade. That position already exists, so the move wouldn't mean additional expense, Lim said.

"We're not creating more government, we're creating more jobs," Lim said. "We export \$11 billion a year, mostly to Asia. We need to do a better job in international trade."

Lim, a native of Korea, said the lieutenant governor could perform ceremonial as well as trade duties and that visiting foreign dignitaries appreciate meeting with top-ranking state leaders.

The lieutenant governor would replace the secretary of state as first in line of succession to the governor if the governor died, resigned or became

unable to fulfill the office's duties.

No one spoke against the measure. Rep. Mark Hass, D-Portland, said after the vote that the measure is a low priority given the state's other needs.

"We need to elevate the quality of education before we elevate a politician to a new office," he said.

Bill: Proof of citizenship required to vote

SALEM — People registering to vote in Oregon for the first time would have to show proof of citizenship under a bill narrowly passed Thursday by the House.

Supporters say the step is needed to prevent illegal aliens from fraudulently registering and voting, but opponents contend there's little or no evidence that it is happening.

The measure passed 31-25 and now goes to the Senate.

The bill's sponsor, Rep. Linda Flores, R-Clackamas, said there are no procedures to ensure that only legal citizens are registering because little or no checking is done.

The bill requires first-time registrants to produce evidence of citizenship, such as a birth certificate, naturalization papers or a passport.

"We need checks and balances before the voting begins," Flores said.

But foes said it would discourage voting by putting needless burdens on citizens who might have problems locating birth records or other documents.

Opponents also said there's no evidence of any non-citizen risking criminal penalties by illegally voting in Oregon.

"This is a misguided and uninformed response to a problem that doesn't exist," said Rep. Peter Buckley, D-Ashland. "Why would an illegal immigrant jeopardize himself by trying to register to vote?"

—The Associated Press

More than 16 people killed as terrorists infiltrate Iraq

BY BASSEM MROUE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Iraq's prime minister called on Syria on Thursday to block the infiltration of foreign fighters trying to start a civil war. More than a dozen Iraqis, including an Oil Ministry engineer, and four U.S. soldiers were reported killed in the ongoing daily bloodshed.

In the day's deadliest incident, a Sunni lawmaker said 10 of his private guards were killed during a chaotic battle with insurgents and Apache helicopter-backed U.S. forces, whom he accused of killing several of his aides. The U.S. military said it was investigating the incident, which it called a terrorist attack on Fawaz al-Jarba's home.

In a message aimed at Syria, Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari said non-Iraqis in neighboring countries filtering across the border were responsible for carrying out "sabotage activities."

His government will do its best "to preserve relations between us and our neighbors, but there are red lines — which are that they don't interfere in our internal affairs, or allow people to cross" into Iraq, he said after a meeting with visiting Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick.

Earlier this week, al-Jaafari pledged to use "an iron fist" to prevent an outbreak of sectarian violence which he has accused supporters of Iraq's top al-Qaida terrorist, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, of trying to foment.

Zoellick said he and al-Jaafari discussed the issue of insurgents crossing into Iraq "and he was quite strong in his statements about the need for Iraq's neighbors, and particularly Syria, you know, not to undermine stability here."

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice

made it "quite clear that we, and others, are watching how Syria behaves itself," Zoellick told reporters.

"Part of these attacks stem from the successes of the new government. The insurgents wanted to stop the elections and failed. The insurgents wanted to stop the formation of a new Iraqi government and they failed, so now they are trying to split the society," Zoellick said.

Another insurgent goal, he said, is to "disrupt the reconstruction so that people lose confidence in the future."

The Syrian government has not commented on allegations that foreign fighters are both slipping into Iraq across its shared border and holding clandestine planning meetings in its country. But in February, Syria captured and handed over Saddam Hussein's half brother in what Iraq called a gesture of goodwill.

A U.S. official said Wednesday that Syria was the site of a key meeting last month in which al-Zarqawi lieutenants were ordered to carry out more attacks in Iraq. More than 520 people have been killed since the country's new Shiite-dominated government was announced April 28.

On Friday al-Jaafari is slated to start a two-day visit to neighboring Turkey, his first foreign trip since becoming prime minister. The insurgency is expected to top the agenda.

The campaign of violence has made the threat of civil war increasingly tangible.

A number of clerics, both Shiite and Sunni, have been killed, and on Thursday three of Iraq's most influential Sunni Muslim organizations called on mosques to shut for three days following Saturday's dawn prayer to protest alleged Shiite violence against them.

In the attack on National Assembly member Fawaz al-Jarba, the Sunni lawmaker said a group of insurgents started shooting at his house in Mosul, 225 miles northwest of Baghdad, around midday.

His personal security men returned fire, sparking a clash that raised the attention of U.S. soldiers in the area, al-Jarba told The Associated Press.

"The firing was coming from all directions, and the Apaches were bombing," said al-Jarba. "The terrorists were firing at me. Why did the Americans start doing this too?"

Al-Jarba, a recent candidate for parliament speaker, said one Apache helicopter flying over his home fired at it, leaving a large hole in his ceiling. Eight of his bodyguards were killed during the initial battle and two died from their wounds later Thursday in hospital, he said. The U.S. military said three terrorists were also wounded in the incident.

One U.S. soldier was killed when his convoy struck a roadside bomb and another two died from wounds suffered when insurgents fired on their convoy Thursday, the U.S. military said. Both incidents occurred in Baghdad. Another American soldier was killed and five wounded late Wednesday in a rocket attack on Camp Ar Ramadi, 70 miles west of Baghdad. The soldiers' names were being held pending notification of family.

Three American soldiers were wounded when a roadside bomb blast struck their patrol in Dujayl, 35 miles north of Baghdad, said military spokesman Sgt. David Rhodes.

At least 1,627 members of the U.S. military have died since the Iraq war started in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count.

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