

# Officials call for Sen. Kruse to resign

## Appeal follows claim of sexual harassment

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Top Oregon political figures called for Sen. Jeff Kruse, R-Roseburg, to resign immediately Thursday, one day after a fellow senator filed a formal complaint against him describing years of unwanted touching and sexual harassment.

“As more facts emerge and accusations surface, we now know his history of behavior is egregious,” said Jeanne Atkins, chairwoman of the Oregon Democratic Party, in her statement calling for his resignation. “There must be consequences — not just never-ending investigations and warnings — for a sitting Oregon senator with this record.”

The incidents described by Sen. Sara Gelser, D-Corvallis, in her five-page complaint include allegations that Kruse whispered so close to her that his tongue was in her ear, that he ran his hands across her breasts, placed his fingers on her thigh underneath the hem of her skirt and wrapped his arms around her from behind.

Some of these incidents occurred on the Senate Chamber floor within eyesight of other lawmakers, who on two occasions interrupted Kruse’s actions.

Gelser also wrote that at least 15 other women have had similar experiences with Kruse.

Kruse previously denied Gelser’s claims. He did not respond to a request for comment for this story.

Rep. Knute Buehler, R-Bend, released a statement Thursday that said Kruse should “do the right thing” and resign, adding that a culture of unprofessional conduct has been acceptable at the Capitol for too long.

“The behavior of Sen. Kruse has no place in civil society or the workplace,” said Buehler, a candidate for governor. “This is especially true for someone who holds the people’s trust and should set a higher standard of behavior.”

Kruse’s hometown newspaper, the News-Review, called for his resignation

in an editorial Thursday.

Other Republican representatives also called on Kruse to resign. On his radio program, Rep. Bill Post, R-Keizer, said as much, and Rep. Julie Parrish, R-West-Linn, said it would “probably be best” for his constituents if he resigned, considering these allegations will make him less effective of a legislator.

Parrish added that Kruse was never “untoward” to her.

Earlier Thursday Parrish took to Twitter to ask newly elected Senate Republican Leader Jackie Winters, R-Salem, to join the chorus seeking Kruse’s resignation.

Winters did not respond to questions Thursday evening to clarify her position.

Statements by lawmakers Nov. 15 did not seek immediate resignation.

After the complaint was filed Wednesday, Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, said the claims would be fully investigated, while Secretary of State Dennis Richardson said Kruse should resign if “due process” found the allegations to be true.

According to the Oregon Legislature’s personnel rules, an independent investigator must be appointed within 10 days of a formal complaint. The investigator then has 60 days to file a draft of the findings, though an extension is possible. A final draft is due 15 days after that to either the director of human resources or the Office of the Legislative Counsel.

This timeline suggests a report could be finalized early in the 2018 short legislative session.

Kruse has been reprimanded for inappropriate interactions with his colleagues before.

In her complaint, Gelser wrote that Kruse has attended multiple training sessions on sexual assault over the years and was told by top officials in the Capitol to stop his behavior after her informal complaints.

Related allegations in late October caused Courtney to strip Kruse of his committee assignments and write him a letter that read, in part: “Women in the



Oregon political officials are now calling for State Sen. Jeff Kruse to resign immediately after a fellow senator filed a complaint alleging years of touching and sexual harassment by Kruse

FILE PHOTO

Capitol do NOT want you to touch them.”

“What troubles me the most is that it is clear Sen. Kruse is not interested or capable of changing his behavior even after it was previously documented and addressed by Senate Leadership,” State

Treasurer Tobias Read said. “It’s time for him to resign.”

Contact the reporter at [cradnovich@statesmanjournal.com](mailto:cradnovich@statesmanjournal.com) or 503-399-6864, or follow him on Twitter at @CDRadnovich.

# Oregon’s pop. grows at fastest rate in 20 years

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Oregon’s population continued to grow at a rapid pace last year, including in the Salem area, as new residents poured into the state.

Oregon’s population reached 4.1 million in 2017, growing by a total of 64,750 during the past year, according to new estimates from Portland State University’s Population Research Center.

The 1.6 percent growth rate, combined with similar gains in 2015 and 2016, mark the largest population growth in Oregon since the 1990s, the report said.

Eighty-eight percent of the increase came from new residents migrating to Oregon, the report said, while only 12 percent was due to an increase of births over deaths.

In the Salem area, Marion and Polk

counties both grew at 1.6 percent, the state average. Marion County’s population increased to 339,200, up by 5,250 people, while Polk County’s population reached 81,000, up by 1,270.

Oregon’s three most populous counties in the Portland metro area experienced the largest gains. Multnomah and Washington counties each added more than 12,000 residents, and Clackamas County added just over 8,000. Portland’s population reached 639,100.

The largest percentage growth occurred in the Central Oregon counties of Deschutes (3.6 percent) and Crook (2.4 percent).

The slowest growing Oregon counties were on the state’s east side, where Grant and Sherman counties each grew by just five people.

The report’s major finding was how much migration was fueling Oregon’s population growth and how much natu-

ral growth has slowed.

“Due to an aging population and declining birth rates, natural increase now contributes less to Oregon’s population growth than at any time since the 1930s,” the report said.

“The number of deaths continues to climb due to the growth in older population.”

At the same time, migration has continued to spike. Over the past five years, people moving to Oregon has added 200,000 to the state population.

“Net migration has accelerated, as the number of people moving to Oregon exceeded the number moving out by more than 50,000 for the second consecutive year,” the report said.

**Notes from report**

► Portland continued to add more residents than any city in Oregon. Its 2017

population of 639,100 includes growth of 11,705 (1.8 percent) since 2016.

► Bend had the second-biggest population gain among Oregon cities, adding 3,265 residents (3.8 percent) to reach a population of 86,765 in 2017.

► Other Oregon cities adding more than 1,000 residents each were Gresham, Hillsboro, Salem, Eugene, Happy Valley, Tigard, Roseburg and Medford. Most of Roseburg’s growth was due to recently annexed population.

► Just over half of Oregon’s counties experienced natural decrease, meaning there were more deaths than births. These included eastern, southwestern and coastal counties. However, net immigration (more people moving in than out) offset these decreases. Net immigration is estimated to have accelerated in most counties statewide over the past several years as the state recovered from the recession.

## Donor gifts Silverton schools \$156K

**CHRISTENA BROOKS**  
SPECIAL TO SALEM STATESMAN JOURNAL  
USA TODAY NETWORK

An anonymous donor has given \$156,000 to the Silver Falls School District, with instructions that the money divided evenly among the district’s 13 schools.

That works out to \$12,000 for each school, from tiny Evergreen School to Silverton High School. The donor also asked that the money be spent by the end of this school year on something

that will “support students,” picked by each campus’ principal and teachers, said Supt. Andy Bellando.

“It’s a bit of a pinch-me-is-this-real opportunity,” Bellando said.

Last week, school principals and staff throughout the district met to decide how to spend the money they received. The deadline for submitting proposals was Friday, Nov. 17.

## Silverton’s 15th Annual Shop Hop helps to encourage local spending

**CHRISTENA BROOKS**  
SPECIAL TO SALEM STATESMAN JOURNAL  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The 15th Annual Shop Hop starts on Black Friday, Nov. 24, and runs through Dec. 12.

Here’s how it works: Visit participating businesses and get your passport stamped; make a purchase of \$5 or more and receive a second stamp; each stamp earns an entry into a drawing.

Winners will be drawn Dec. 13 at the Silverton Business Group meeting. A grand prize winner will receive one gift certificate from each Shop Hop business, with a total value of \$725. There will also be one winner from each individual business, 30 prizes in all.

Passports are available at the Silverton Chamber of Commerce, 426 S. Water Street and at participating businesses. For more information, call 503-873-5615.

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