



Andrew Selsky/The Associated Press

Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Oregon, poses for a photo in his office in Portland on Sept. 7, 2018. Merkley, a frequent critic of President Donald Trump, is seriously considering a run for the White House.

# Merkley eyeing White House run

By Andrew Selsky  
The Associated Press

PORTLAND — He's a Democrat, a liberal senator who wants to make Medicare available for all Americans, has pushed bills to stem climate change and is a sharp critic of President Donald Trump. And he's seriously considering a run for the White House.

It's not Vermont's Bernie Sanders. It's Jeff Merkley, a senator from Oregon whose national profile rose this year when he led opposition to the Trump administration's immigration policy that saw parents forcibly separated from their children.

Merkley, in trying to gauge voter interest in a run for the presidency, has already visited Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina and Nevada, states that have early primaries and caucuses in the presidential sweepstakes.

He didn't have much name recognition nationally until last June, when he tried to enter a federal facility in Texas where immigrant children were being held. An aide videotaped the scene as he was refused entry and police were called. The video quickly went viral with over 1 million views in a day, and was repeated in newscasts across the country.

In October, Merkley introduced legislation to prevent the Trump administration from forcing asylum seekers into internment camps.

"It's just a simple question of human decency and justice," Merkley said in an interview with The Associated Press. "We're a nation of immigrants. The vast bulk of us have, somewhere in our ancestry, people who fled religious persecution, famine, or war."

Merkley said immigrants fleeing persecution were being treated as criminals and are being traumatized. He described the forced separation of children from their parents as "an obscenely dark and evil act."

The administration says the crackdown is necessary to stop illegal immigration.

In his trips to other states Merkley has spoken with people "in their living rooms, their porches, their backyards (and) nearby parks."

"You get together with a bunch of people and you talk about the state of the world," he explained. He discussed with them issues he has led on, including ending predatory home mortgages; battling "climate chaos" — as he calls climate change; fighting for equality for the LGBT community; and opposing trade agreements that ship Americans' jobs overseas.

"The feedback's been very positive," Merkley said, though a beat later he added maybe the people were just being polite.

His father was a millwright maintaining machines in a plywood mill and in the forest then did other jobs. Merkley lives in a one-story house in the same blue-collar neighborhood of Portland where he grew up, giving him a humble Jimmy Carter quality.

Carter lives in the same house in Plains, Georgia, he built in 1961. He too was a little-known Democrat on the national stage before being elected president in 1976.

Merkley, 62, attributed his success to "serendipity."

"If I lived a thousand lifetimes I would probably never have been in the U.S. Senate," he said.

As a kid, Merkley excelled in math and science. He applied for college at almost the last minute, being unfamiliar with the process, and was accepted at Stanford and Yale. He chose Stanford for the financial aid.

He was shocked to learn all the other students in his dorm had visited the campus before. It had never occurred to his family to do so, and they lacked the money anyway.

"It was a stressful couple of years (but) I wanted to prove that the blue-collar kid could keep up with the kids from prep schools, so I had to work a little harder," he said.

His first exposure to national politics

began when he interned in Washington, D.C., for Sen. Mark Hatfield, a moderate Republican. He was elected to the Oregon Legislature and then won Hatfield's former Senate seat in 2008, narrowly defeating the Republican incumbent. He handily won reelection six years later.

Merkley is busy these days boosting, with appearances and donations, 18 Democratic candidates in key states via his Blue Wave political action committee. He's also hiring field staff in states like Iowa and New Hampshire to back some of those candidates, workers who could assist in laying the groundwork for his presidential run.

If he decides to run, Merkley must find a niche in a potentially crowded field, said Travis Ridout, a professor of government and public policy at Washington State University. The key is finding appeal from at least one segment of the party, whether liberal progressives, racial and ethnic minorities, labor unions or others, Ridout said.

"Trying to distinguish yourself with so many potential candidates is a difficult task," Ridout said. However, Democrats seem to be looking for someone new who they feel can win, a potential plus for Merkley, Ridout said.

Merkley has been compared to Sanders, who lost the Democratic nomination in 2016 to Hillary Clinton. Politico Magazine said Merkley, the only senator to endorse Sanders in 2016, "could inherit Bernie Sanders' progressive mantle in 2020."

Sanders' supporters complained the party machinery was skewed against his candidacy, but Merkley believes the machinery isn't going to be that important in 2018.

"I think it's going to be people in these states who get excited about one candidate or another," Merkley said. "And you know, some kind of magic happens along the way, but you don't really know how that's going to unfold."

Merkley said he'll decide whether to run after next week's midterm election.

## OREGON IN BRIEF

From wire reports

### Body dumped ID'd as Portland woman; husband arrested

PORTLAND — Authorities have arrested the husband of a woman whose body was found near a summer camp southeast of Portland.

The Oregonian/Oregon-Live reports the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office arrested 45-year-old Martin Gallo-Gallardo Monday.

The sheriff's office says he's facing a murder charge in the death of 38-year-old Coral Rodrigues-Lorenzo.

Her body was found Sunday by a worker at Camp Namanu near the Sandy River.

Clackamas County deputies say they believe she had been left in a ditch there on Saturday or Sunday.

The sheriff's office says Gallo-Gallardo confessed to killing Rodrigues-Lorenzo during a Monday interview with detectives.

He was booked in the Clackamas County Jail and is being held without bail.

It wasn't immediately known if he had an attorney to speak for him.

### Police: Oregon teen plotted to drug, kill his parents

PORTLAND — Authorities say a 14-year-old Oregon boy planned to kill his parents by setting fire to their Albany home after drugging them with sleeping pills supplied by a 13-year-old friend.

The Oregonian/Oregon-Live reports both boys were arrested on suspicion of attempted aggravated murder and attempted arson.

They were being held Tuesday at the Linn-Benton Juvenile Detention Center.

Prosecutors say the boys will not be charged as adults.

Benton County Under-sheriff Greg Ridler says at least six children heard discussions about the boy's plan for violence, leading to a child telling an adult.

That person told the father of the 14-year-old, resulting in a call to police last week.

Ridler says the teen's motive for planning to kill his parents was not immediately clear.

### Woman pleads guilty to negligent homicide in baby's drowning

EUGENE — A Florence woman has pleaded guilty to negligent homicide in the

drowning of her 8-month-old child.

The Register-Guard reports 30-year-old Angela Louise Davis pleaded guilty Tuesday in Lane County Circuit Court in the Feb. 22 death of Brentley Pinnock.

She acknowledged in court that she had, without legal justification, caused her baby's death by leaving him unattended in a bathtub as it filled with water.

Police say Davis reported she fell asleep on her couch, awoke after 10 minutes and returned to the bathroom, where she found her son submerged.

Florence police arrested Davis after a Lane County grand jury returned an indictment in May, charging her with causing the child's death.

Davis is scheduled for sentencing in December.

### Court documents: Man killed was stabbed in chest with sword

PORTLAND — Court records say a Portland man who was killed last week was stabbed in the chest with a sword that was hidden in a cane.

A probable cause affidavit says Timothy Cato pulled out the sword while 28-year-old Tyler Chism was arguing with his girlfriend around 2 a.m. Thursday in Northwest Portland.

The affidavit says Cato and an unidentified woman approached Chism and his girlfriend and Cato pulled out the sword and stabbed Chism in the chest.

The affidavit says Cato then sheathed the sword and used the cane for assistance as he walked away, leaving the wounded man on the ground.

# Chinese intelligence officers charged

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Chinese intelligence officers and hackers working for them have been charged with commercial espionage that included trying to steal information on commercial jet engines, federal prosecutors said Tuesday.

The indictments named two officers working for the Nanjing-based foreign intelligence arm of China's Ministry of State Security and six other defendants who allegedly conspired from 2010 to 2015 to steal sensitive turbofan engine technology used in commercial aviation.

The hackers used spear

phishing to deploy malware and other means to intrude into a French aerospace company that was developing the engines with a U.S. company, prosecutors said. The suspects also hacked into aerospace companies in Massachusetts, Oregon and Arizona that manufactured engine parts.

A Chinese state-owned aerospace company was working at the time to develop a similar type of engine for use in commercial aircraft.

"This action is yet another example of criminal efforts by the (Ministry of State Security) to facilitate the theft of private data for China's commercial gain," U.S. Attor-

ney Adam Braverman said in a statement. "The concerted effort to steal, rather than simply purchase, commercially available products should offend every company that invests talent, energy, and shareholder money into the development of products."

The Justice Department in recent years has brought similar prosecutions against Chinese military or government officials accused of hacking into American corporations to steal secrets and prosecutors vowed to redouble those efforts.

In 2014, for instance, the department announced an indictment against five

military officers accused of breaking into the computer systems of big-name makers of nuclear and solar technology and stealing confidential business information, sensitive trade secrets and internal communications for competitive advantage.

Earlier this month, an accused Chinese spy was charged with attempting to steal secrets from several American aviation and aerospace companies and extradited to the U.S. Federal authorities said it was the first time that a Chinese Ministry of State Security intelligence officer had been extradited to the United States for trial.

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