

SESSION

Continued from Page 1A for working to get a special session organized.

An Aug. 15 letter from the Oregon District Attorney's Association urged Prozanski and Rep. Jennifer Williamson, D-Portland, to call a special session after the DOJ declared the bill retroactive.

"This law is a failure on multiple levels — a failure to respect the will of voters, a failure to draft a clear law for Oregon's most dangerous criminals, and a failure of trust by telling voters it is



Smith

not retroactive when the opposite is true," the letter said.

The ODAA also suggested that six of the current 31 death row inmates in Oregon would be considered for aggravated murder prosecution under the new law.

Prozanski and Hansell both expressed concern over the families of victims who might be affected by the retroactivity.

Hansell said there was widespread bipartisan support in the Senate to hold the session, and that he thought there was support among both parties in the House as well.

"It doesn't take a rocket scientist to fix this, but there were people who were unwilling. I thought there was support on the House side. I don't know if the governor was dodging it," he said.

Prozanski agreed that Senate was ready to make the quick change in a special session on Sept. 27, two days before the bill is set to go into effect. But he didn't think it was Brown's fault that the session never happened.

"The Senate, as far as I'm concerned, stepped up to the issue that needed to be taken care of," Prozanski said. "From my perspective, the reason it couldn't go forward because the House was playing politics."

Prozanski said he thought Monday's republican leadership shakeup, which resulted in the election of Rep. Christine Drazen, R-Canby, as minority leader, was the reason the House couldn't convince Brown there was enough support to hold quick and easy special session.

"We tried and we just weren't able to convince her and her caucus to say yes," Prozanski said of Drazen.

"I personally encouraged Brown to bring us in anyway. I can also understand that when you call a special session, there are some things that can happen."

Rep. Greg Smith, R-Heppner, said he didn't think a special session was necessarily on the table in the first place, although he would have liked to see the bill amended.

"We heard rumors about the special session, but I never heard from leadership that it was a go," he said.

Smith said he thinks voters will petition to overhaul the legislation. Hansell said he is hopeful, but hasn't heard any evidence that this will happen.

"There's always that option. There's been no effort because everyone assumed that legislature can fix it. Now that we're not moving in that direction, I would think there's certainly a possibility," Hansell said.

Big air at the skate park



Sabrina Thompson /The Observer

La Grande Parks and Recreation hosted its annual Skateboard Tournament Saturday. Though no skateboarders competed, 11 BMX and scooter riders showed off their skills with tricks in intermediate and advanced divisions.

TOP PHOTO: Zachary Swartout took fourth place in the BMX intermediate division.

RIGHT: Colton Fender took fourth place in the Scooter Advanced division

BOTTOM: Ethan Johnson won first place in the BMX advanced division after landing a tailwhip during his final run.



Sabrina Thompson /The Observer



Sabrina Thompson /The Observer

STRIKE

Continued from Page 1A senior citizens — were also there to hear him and La Grande Mayor Steve Clements speak about the effect that climate change is having. DuVernay also read aloud a letter written by Senator Merkley. Once they walked to the County Clerks office on 4th Street, DuVernay spoke again about the importance of making a change, and then opened the

mic to anyone who wanted to talk about the issue.

DuVernay wore a flag with the Earth on it as a cape during the march. He said he thought it would be nice for people to see while they walked. He said it was given to him by Fuji Kreider, who DuVernay said was very helpful during this process.

According to the Climate Strike website, protests took place in 150 countries across the globe, with some gatherings having turnouts of more

than 100,000 people. While DuVernay's protest wasn't as grand in scale, he was still proud of the work he did in informing the community about the importance of demanding urgent action on climate change.

According to an NPR article, "Millions of people raised their voices at protests around the world Friday in a massive display meant to demand urgent action on climate change."

"I would call the event a success," the student activist said.

MERA

Continued from Page 1A about the event.

MERA MTB Day was also a great way to showcase the recent award given to Union County for MERA's multi-use trails by the Coalition for Recreational Trails.

"The award is for excellent use of funds through the Recreational Trails Program and managing a shared corridor of multi-use," Sean Chambers, Union County Parks and MERA coordinator, said. "That is speaking to our motorized facing and non motorized facing usage. Another layer is how well the bikers and equestrians and hikers come together within that."

The RTP provides funds to the States to develop and

maintain recreational trails for both non motorized and motorized trail use, according to the Federal Highway Administration website.

The trails on MERA are not segregated by usage, something Chambers said is intended to give all recreationists equal access.

"Everyone is getting along really well and the sharing is a success," Chambers said.

Chambers went to Washington, D.C., in June to accept the award on the county's behalf. He was also at Saturday's event with his family, which was fitting because his two young children — who are beginners

— often bike alongside him on MERA's trails.

Chambers said an event like the MERA MTB Day encourages riders of all ages and abilities to take the opportunity to see what MERA has to offer.

"We all start somewhere," Chambers said. "The earlier in life you start (mountain biking), the more likely you will be to make that a part of your daily living."

The Blue Mountains Singletrack Trails Club is a nonprofit organization that works to create and maintain trails in Northeast Oregon. One aim of Saturday's MERA event was to recruit new members and

fundraise by selling T-shirts and shuttle passes.

"(The club) was a way to organize our efforts as we try to develop trails and have a sense of group work and group think so that everyone appreciates what we've got up here," Mosinan said.

RALLY

Continued from Page 1A fighting and dying to defend it. For the future generations who will defend it," Anchors said. "It is our responsibility not to live in apathy with the assumption that the laws and the Constitution work for us while we sit idly by. But, that we keep democracy alive with our own ability in defending our nation's path to a more perfect union."

Anchors urged elected officials to come forward and listen to the people.

"We are demanding it now. We are demanding that our public officials not hide from us, (that they do not) only select a certain few of their constituents that they would prefer to represent but not others. We demand that our public officials defend our democracy and not contribute to breaking it down," Anchors said.

Bill Whitaker of La Grande, a member of the Union County Progressives, spoke at the rally of the need to get "dark money" out of politics. Dark money is a term used to describe political spending by groups whose own donors are allowed to remain hidden because of loopholes in disclosure laws.

"(The donors of dark money) are very rich people who hide contributions so money cannot be traced to them," Whitaker said.

He said dark money is putting our nation at risk.

"Dark money is a real threat to democracy," Whitaker said. "It is not acceptable. We have to get rid of it if we are to defend democracy. It is absolutely essential that we do this."

Whitaker also took on Trump, criticizing him for continuing to try to dismantle the Affordable Care Act, which allows millions of Americans to have affordable health insurance.

"What Trump is doing is just terrible," Whitaker said.

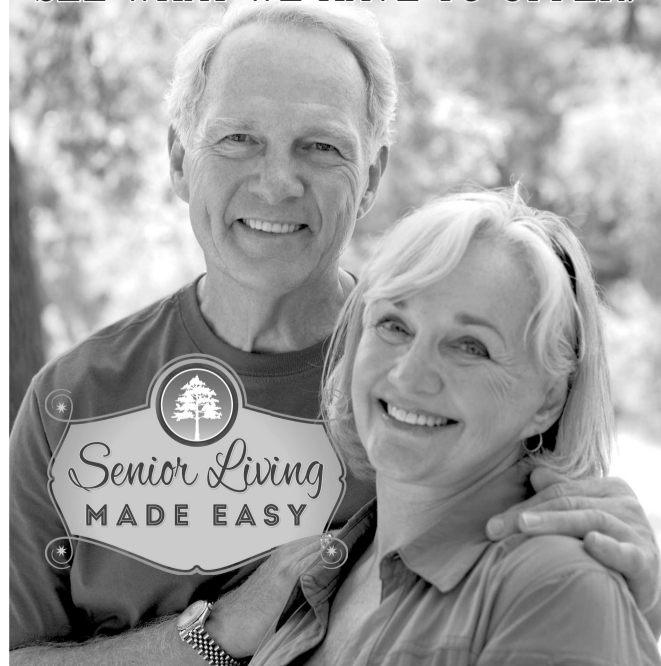
Nora Croucher of La Grande also spoke at the rally. Croucher said that it is the responsibility of the people of the United States to take steps to get the country moving in a better direction. She said it would not be wise to wait for our elected leaders to take action.

"The leaders are ourselves," Croucher said.

A number of messages were posted on the door outside of Walden's office at the rally. One was a "Ban Assault Weapons" sign put up by Anchors. When discussing her support of the proposed ban before the rally, Anchors said that people have to put their fears aside if they want to make a difference in curbing gun violence in America.

"If we are to do our part to save lives in the future, we cannot be afraid," Anchors said.

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