

Oregon GOP legislator ousted over state Capitol breach

By **ANDREW SELSKY**

The Associated Press

SALEM — Republican lawmakers voted with majority Democrats in the Oregon House of Representatives to take the historic step of expelling a Republican member who let violent, far-right protesters into the state Capitol on Dec. 21.

Legislators said on the House floor that this could be the most important vote they ever cast. They then proceeded Thursday, June 10, to expel an unapologetic Rep. Mike Nearman with a 59-1 vote, marking the first time a member has been expelled by the House in its 160-year history. The only vote against the resolution for expulsion was Nearman's own.

Rep. Paul Holvey, a Democrat who chaired a committee that earlier in the day unanimously recommended Nearman's expulsion, reminded lawmakers of the events of Dec. 21, which were an eerie foreshadowing of the much more serious Jan. 6 assault on the U.S. Capitol.



Kaylee Domzalski/Oregon Public Broadcasting, File

Rep. Mike Nearman, R-Independence, chats with fellow representatives on the Oregon House floor on April 11, 2019, at the Capitol in Salem. The House on Thursday, June 10, 2021, voted 59-1 to expel Nearman after video emerged showing he helped plan an armed incursion in the state Capitol late last year. Nearman was the lone vote against.

“On the morning of Dec. 21st, a couple hundred protesters — some of them heavily armed and wearing body armor — arrived at the Capitol for a protest, with the intent to illegally enter and presum-

ably occupy the building and interrupt the proceedings of the Oregon Legislature,” Holvey said. “Staff and legislators were terrified. We can only speculate what would have happened if they were able to get all

the way in.”

Nearman said he let the protesters in because he believes the Capitol, which has been closed to the public to protect against spread of the coronavirus, should have been open. The

assault happened during a peak of the pandemic.

But even Republicans, who are often bitterly opposed to Democratic initiatives on climate change and some other bills, said the crowd outside the Capitol that day was not made up of constituents who wanted to peacefully engage in the democratic process.

Some were carrying guns. Some shouted false QAnon conspiracy theories about Democrats kidnapping babies. They carried American flags, banners for former President Donald Trump and a sign calling for the arrest of Democratic Gov. Kate Brown. They broke windows and assaulted journalists.

“Nobody should have opened the door to the people who were here that day,” said Rep. Daniel Bonham, a Republican and a member Holvey's special committee.

The final straw for Republican House members came on June 4, when video emerged showing Nearman choreographing how he

would let protesters into the Capitol a few days before it actually happened. For his fellow lawmakers, that was proof it was a premeditated act, which Nearman acknowledged. All 22 of his fellow House Republicans wrote him on Monday, strongly recommending he resign.

As lawmakers gathered to decide Nearman's fate, a few dozen people waving American flags and one carrying a sign saying “I am Mike Nearman” gathered outside the Capitol. One repeatedly kicked a metal door, sending booms through a marble hallway of the building.

Nearman was seen on security video opening a door to protesters on Dec. 21 as lawmakers met in emergency session to deal with economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic. Protesters barged into the building, which was closed to the public because of coronavirus safety protocols, got into shoving matches with police and sprayed officers with bear spray.

Oregon might revamp vaccination lottery to spur more vaccinations

By **AIMEE GREEN**

The Oregonian

SALEM — The number of Oregonians getting vaccinated against COVID-19 has nose-dived since Gov. Kate Brown announced a \$1 million lottery for vaccinated residents a few weeks ago.

The state says it's now looking at ways to spark more enthusiasm — and inoculations among those still unvaccinated — in the three weeks left before the drawing is held.

Charles Boyle, a governor's spokesman, said in an email that the governor's office is “exploring options

for drawings earlier in the month to continue to generate excitement throughout the next several weeks.”

Brown also hinted at a news conference Friday, June 4, that more prizes may be added to the offerings in coming days, though she hasn't yet shared any details.

“We have more surprises in the works that you'll hear about soon,” Brown said. “So if you haven't yet been vaccinated, now is the time. You never know, you may just walk into a vaccine clinic or a pharmacy to get your vaccine and find out you're a winner.”

Oregon is among one

of at least nine states — including Washington last week — drumming up lotteries in hopes of elevating immunization numbers that have plummeted in the late spring nationwide. Most are offering to make at least one person in each of their borders a millionaire — but only if they're vaccinated against COVID-19.

Brown announced May 21 that Oregon is offering a \$1 million jackpot, three dozen awards of \$10,000 doled out to one person in each of the state's counties, and five scholarships of \$100,000 for youth for college or vocational school.

But unlike other states that started their drawings within a week or two of their announcements and that are holding drawings weekly or even daily, Oregon will draw all its winners on one day, June 28, which is more than five weeks after Brown announced the lottery's creation.

Officials estimate it could be another week beyond that date before they announce the winners.

State officials seem to have acknowledged that delayed timeline might have put a damper on the initial zeal and urgency to go out

and get vaccinated as soon as possible.

“The ‘Take Your Shot Oregon’ campaign was designed for simplicity, so that there would be a significant period of time to incentivize vaccinations prior to June 28,” said Boyle, before adding that the state might tweak that strategy to award some new prizes soon.

The lottery, he cautioned, is one of many strategies the state is using to increase inoculations.

“No individual strategy is expected to have a singularly massive impact or to wholly reverse vaccination rate trends,” Boyle said.

“Each strategy adds a little energy to the overall effort.”

So far, the day-to-day number of newly vaccinated people in Oregon has been disappointing.

While Oregon was administering about 17,000 shots as of midweek last week — about half of the number it was administering when Brown announced the lottery — that includes shots for people who already opted to get vaccinated and are receiving a second dose.

The key metric to watch to gauge the lottery's performance is the number of unvaccinated people receiving their first shots.

SENATE BILL 819

Bill allowing prosecutors, prisoners to ask for conviction reviews gets passed

By **NOELLE CROMBIE**

The Oregonian

SALEM — A bill that would allow a district attorney and a person convicted of a crime to ask a judge to revisit a conviction or reduce a prison sentence has passed both chambers of the Legislature and now heads to the governor's desk.

Senate Bill 819 was hailed Tuesday, June 8, by advocates and supporters as among the most significant changes to the criminal justice system to emerge from the legislative session.

The bill gives prosecutors and a person with a conviction the chance to jointly ask a judge to make a change that could include dropping a felony to a mis-

demeanor, erasing a conviction altogether or reducing the length of a person's sentence.

The district attorney would have to agree to the petition before it could be heard by the court.

The bill was requested by the Criminal Justice Reform Clinic at Lewis & Clark Law School. Aliza Kaplan, a law school professor who runs the clinic, said the bill would be most useful in cases where someone was convicted of a crime based on outdated forensic science.

Kaplan said California and Washington have similar policies that are used sparingly.

The bill would allow petitions in other situations as well, such as in

cases when a Black defendant received a significantly higher sentence than a white person in a similar situation or when a person who committed a crime long ago and has been out of prison and out of trouble cannot apply for professional licenses because of an old felony.

Kaplan said an incarcerated person with terminal illness and less than a year to live also might be a candidate to have their sentence revisited under the bill.

“It's really up to the district attorneys and what their priorities are,” she said. “It's also up to them whether they even use it.”

She called it “one of the most important pieces of criminal justice reform legislation that Oregon” has undertaken in a long time.

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