

Salem Update

By State Representative Brad Witt



There's scarcely a week that goes by that we do not read about some incident involving cyber bullying, "sexting," or other transmissions of

images and remarks that are devastating, even life changing, to the object of these postings. You may recall that several teenage girls were seriously affected by such events in the Clatskanie area a couple of years ago. Recently the legislature passed SB 188, which creates a crime of unlawful dissemination of an intimate image. The bill came at the request of the Attorney General and a work group comprised of all segments of the legal community.

Our laws clearly needed to be updated to reflect new technologies that can be used to harass and humiliate unsuspecting victims. The consequences will be substantial, with the first offense subject to a maximum of one year's imprisonment, \$6,250 fine, or both. Subsequent offenses may garner up to 5 years in prison and/or a \$125,000 fine.

Another bill, SB 919, introduced at the request of our own Senator Betsy Johnson, amends the disorderly conduct statute and elevates the penalties for those who falsely report hazardous substance, fire, explosion, catastrophe or other threats of emergency in all public buildings and court facilities to a Class A Misdemeanor for a first offense, and to a Class C Felony for each subsequent offense. It also elevates the penalty if the location of the false report is a school.

We have had a number of such incidents in Columbia County, with three bomb threats called into the Columbia County Courthouse in the space of 6 months last year. St. Helens High School experienced a similar threat in September 2014, and Scappoose in February of this year. Thankfully, they were all hoaxes, but going forward, perpetrators when apprehended will be subject to enhanced penalties, the same as those described above involving cyber offenses.

On a happier note, HB 3014 passed the House and will give grandparents some reason for optimism when it comes to visitation rights with their grandchildren. Currently, grandparents may be excluded from notice and visitation provisions if the parental rights of the parents have been

terminated. Termination is perhaps the most serious consequence of failure to parent appropriately, and in those cases, the grandparents may be the only source of stability that the children have. This bill ensures that grandparents have the right to notice and visitation even if the parents are no longer in the picture.

SB 79A requires school districts to provide instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of external defibrillators (AEDs). In 2010, the legislature required all schools to have AEDs on their premises and I know that many schools have at least one adult on site who knows how to use them. Beginning with the 2015-16 school year, as a part of the health education or PE curriculum, school districts will be required to provide instruction to students in grades seven through twelve. This will include hands-on CPR and how to use an AED based on nationally recognized emergency cardiac guidelines. This is very exciting when we take into consideration that every year about 45,000 students graduate from high school and move into the general population. Having that many more people versed in these life-saving techniques is truly a wonderful prospect.

I'm glad to hear from people all over our district that are genuinely interested in what is happening in Salem, especially what has happened since the inauguration of our new Governor, Kate Brown. I think it is fair to say that she has taken hold of the reins of government and is moving forward with her own policies and programs. Evidence of this can be found in her legislative agenda, which includes a package of ethics reform measures: HB 2020, HB 2019, and SB 9. These bills respond to the many Oregonians who have demanded clearly defined regulations for those within the Executive Branch, as well as revised procedures regarding requests for public records.

The House passed HB 2020, which formally defines "first partner" as the spouse or domestic partner of the Governor, and it requires the Oregon Government Ethics Commission to determine those definitions by rule.

SB 2019 expands the Oregon Government Ethics Commission from seven to nine members and shortens the preliminary review period for an ethics complaint from the current maximum 135 days to 30 days. It should not take more than 4 months to determine if there is cause for further investigation.

SB 9 asks the Secretary of State to conduct a performance audit to examine state agency retention and disclosure policies when it comes to requests for public records. This should provide some clarification for both the agency and the public as to what is exempt, what is a reasonable fee, and what should be considered a timely response to these requests.

This leads us to the Governor's next initiative, which calls for a study on campaign finance limits. Oregon is the only state in the nine western state region with no limits on campaign contributions. As Gov. Brown states, "No one should be able to buy a megaphone so big it drowns out every other voice. It's time to reopen conversations about reasonable campaign limits in Oregon." As a result, she has asked for the creation of a task force, with representation from all stakeholders and chaired by Secretary of State Jeanne Atkins, to deliver recommendations by the end of the year.

The Governor's push for transparency and accountability has resonated well with her constituents. A recent survey reported a statewide approval rating of 55%. So, when people ask me, "How's Kate doing," I think it is safe to say that Oregonians appreciate her efforts to reinforce the reputation that Oregon has for clean government. In partnership with the Legislature, she is working to restore faith in public service and to make sure that those who follow her will have clear directions as to what Oregonians expect of their elected officials.

Two more bills of interest
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Nominations Wanted For "Citizen of the Year"

The Vernonia Friendship Jamboree and Logging Show Committee is seeking nominations for "Citizen of the Year" to be recognized at the 2015 Jamboree celebration on August 7-9.

If you know someone who deserves recognition for their contributions to the Vernonia community please fill out this nomination form and drop it off in the box at Vernonia City Hall by July 10, 2015.

My nomination for 2015 Jamboree Citizen of the Year is:

Cedar Side Inn

4th of July BBQ

Ribs, fries & coleslaw or potato salad 5 - 10 pm

Burgers & Bluegrass

BBQ & Basinbillies in the yard

Friday, July 24th

Karaoke

Every 2nd & Last Friday

Taco Tuesday

from opening until 9pm

3 hardshell or 1 softshell \$4.25

Ladies' Night

every Thursday 6pm-close

• Free Pool • Free WiFi • Specialty Pizzas



Check our Facebook page for daily specials and upcoming events
756 Bridge Street, Vernonia 503-429-5841



Happy Hour Mon-Fri 4-7
Lady's Night Wed 5-12

Events

Sat, July 25th
Dr. Stahl

Fri & Sat, Aug 7 & 8
Dixie Wrecked

Sat, July 25th
Melody Butchers

"STILL BIKER FRIENDLY"

- Specialty hamburgers
- Draft beer & mixed drinks
- Pool tables & satellite TV
- Pool Tourny Most Friday nights
- Free Wi-fi
- Beer & Kegs to go

Sun - Thurs 11 AM - Midnight • Fri - Sat 11 AM - 2:30 AM
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