

Legislature Votes to Approve Student Success Act *continued from front page*

walkout at the beginning of the school day in coordination with the school administration, and met with supporters in front of the school, while students attended brief, age appropriate assemblies that discussed public discourse and civic engagement.

Following her statement Safier explained why Vernonia teachers chose not to walk out for the entire school day. "In certain districts the message is best sent by shutting down and having teachers march. If our message today is to encourage Vernonians and other community members to pay attention, then shutting down after all our snow days isn't the best way to show it. We think this is a better way to show solidarity with the community members."

"Our students deserve small class sizes," said Safier in closing. "Our

students deserve restored music and arts programs. They deserve access to counselors and nurses. It's time for Salem to invest in education."

While teachers were encouraging the legislature to increase education funding, Senate Republicans failed to show up for a scheduled vote on the bill for four straight days during the week of May 6, holding out for PERS reform. This denied Democrats a 20 person quorum - Democrats needed two Republicans to appear - and shut down all legislative business in Salem. It was reported that a number of Republicans had left the state so they could not be forced to appear at the Senate to vote.

Over the Mother's Day weekend legislators hammered out a compromise, with help from Oregon Governor Kate Brown, that brought three Republicans

back to the Senate chambers on Monday for the vote.

As part of the compromise, Democrats have promised to address funding for PERS. They also agreed to kill a bill requiring students in public schools to be vaccinated, and dropped a bill on gun control.

"I made an impassioned plea on the floor yesterday that we have to have meaningful, and I mean meaningful and substantive, reform to PERS, otherwise the outcome that we all so desperately want for education will not be achieved," said Senator Johnson in her phone interview. "So I decided that as long as I laid down a marker saying the two things needed to be together - funding for education and PERS reform this session - I could support a huge tax increase."

Some Democrats in Salem were jubilant after the Senate passage of the Student Success Act, while others were more pragmatic.

"This is a historic, historic day," said Senate Majority Leader Ginny Burdick, a Democrat from Portland who was a chief supporter of the gun control bill. "This is not a pretty process sometimes, but we have a gorgeous result today."

"I have not been the tiniest bit shy about saying that we cannot pass these taxes without PERS reform," said Senator Johnson. "We cannot cost businesses more and by extension cost Oregonians more, if we're not willing to admit that we need to make serious reforms to PERS."

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country's landmark civil rights laws guarantee all people the right to be safe, secure, and free from discrimination. I'm proud to stand with the LGBTQ community as we fight for equality nationwide.

The Department of Education has a responsibility to protect ALL students. Yet the Trump administration has rolled back crucial protections for transgender students. When I asked Sec. DeVos whether she knew that these actions would put transgender students at risk, she admitted that she did. The Department of Education's failure to protect transgender children is unconscionable, and I will continue to stand up for transgender kids and their families.

Acting on Our Climate Agenda

The House is making progress on our climate action agenda. I presided over the House for final passage of the Climate Action Now Act, which will honor our country's commitments under the Paris Agreement and lay the groundwork for further action.

Oceans and estuaries are facing the consequences of our inaction to reduce human-caused emissions of greenhouse gases. The Science Committee unanimously approved my bipartisan bill, the COAST Research Act, to help communities facing ocean acidification. With this bill, we can support vulnerable communities and industries by strengthening research on how they can best prepare and, when possible, adapt to ocean and coastal acidification. Our oceans and estuaries are resilient, but threatened. We must take action to

help them heal.

At home in Oregon I visited Seaside High School, where students are monitoring water quality to help surfers and swimmers know when it's safe to be in the water. I also saw an enormous wave energy device before it shipped out to Hawaii for testing. Oregon is at the forefront of marine energy, and as we transition to a clean energy economy robust federal investment can help unleash innovation and catalyze industries that harness the power of our oceans' waves. I'll continue to champion clean energy and make sure we are creating good-paying jobs and growing the economy as we address the climate crisis.

Visiting Schools

and Supporting Students

Visiting schools and seeing students learning gives me hope for the future. Last month I visited five schools and convened a roundtable discussion with leaders in higher education. At Imlay Elementary, students had the opportunity to dissect fish in a hands-on science lesson, thanks to the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership. In Hillsboro and Gaston, students in career and technical education courses were receiving real-world job experience and learning valuable skills. I also celebrated the artistic talents of students across Northwest Oregon who submitted their artwork to my Congressional Art Competition. The winner, Jennie Cho, will have her artwork displayed in the Capitol in Washington D.C. for one year.

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