

Republican Ron Maurer ready to take seat as District 3 state representative

Legislative freshman concerned about spending proposals listed by governor; Notes that funding for troopers available without new sources

BY SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

Monday, Jan. 8 is scheduled as opening day for the 2007 Oregon Legislature at the state capitol in Salem.

Among the freshmen legislators who will be sworn in that day is Ron Maurer, who was elected Nov. 7, 2006 to represent House District 3, which includes Cave Junction and Grants Pass.

Maurer, a Republican, ran for the seat after Gordon Anderson incumbent and former Grants Pass mayor, announced that he would not seek re-election.

Since November, Maurer has been preparing for the legislative duties that lie ahead. Aside from attending orientation meetings at the capitol, Maurer has been speaking with indi-

viduals and groups, including Three Rivers School District, Grants Pass City Council and Cave Junction Mayor Tony Paulson.

“Basically, I’ve just



been meeting with people to hear what they are interested in and what their concerns are,” Maurer said.

One of his biggest tasks so far has been studying Democratic Gov. Kulon-

goski’s proposed, “Hope and Opportunity” budget for the 2007-09 biennium. Despite record revenues flooding into state coffers, Kulongoski has suggested new revenue-raising measures -- including a surcharge on automobile insurance, eliminating the corporate tax kicker, raising cigarette taxes and raising the corporate minimum tax.

“It looks like the people of Oregon better hold on to their wallets,” Maurer said. “The governor wants to spend their money.”

According to a Dec. 4 press release from Kulongoski’s office, the automobile insurance surcharge would raise \$25 million during the biennium. The funds would go toward increased law enforcement coverage statewide by Oregon State Police troopers.

While Maurer said that public safety “should be one of the primary priorities of state government,” he does not support the proposed auto insurance surcharge.

“We should be able to fund state troopers at an appropriate level based on the general fund and not have to go look for new streams of revenue,” Maurer said. “The governor has already admitted that there is enough money in the budget to fund troopers without a surcharge on auto insurance.”

The “Hope and Opportunity” budget also calls for diverting the state’s corporate kicker to a “rainy day fund.” That move would raise \$275 million, according to Kulongoski’s office.

Maurer said that he is unwilling to support such a proposal at this point.

“If we want to change

the rules going forward, we can have that debate,” Maurer said. “As far as robbing corporations of the tax kicker that was established some time ago, I am adamantly against it.”

Maurer said there is “probably some political will” to review raising the corporate minimum tax, but that he needs to examine the issue further before taking a stand on it.

“If Intel or Nike pays \$10 (for an increased corporate tax), people do have concerns, but when it’s Mom and Pop Inc., then we’ve got different issues,” Maurer said. “Any time you look at taxes, you have to look at the consequences and see what it does to jobs for people that rely on businesses to survive.”

The governor’s proposed cigarette tax increase

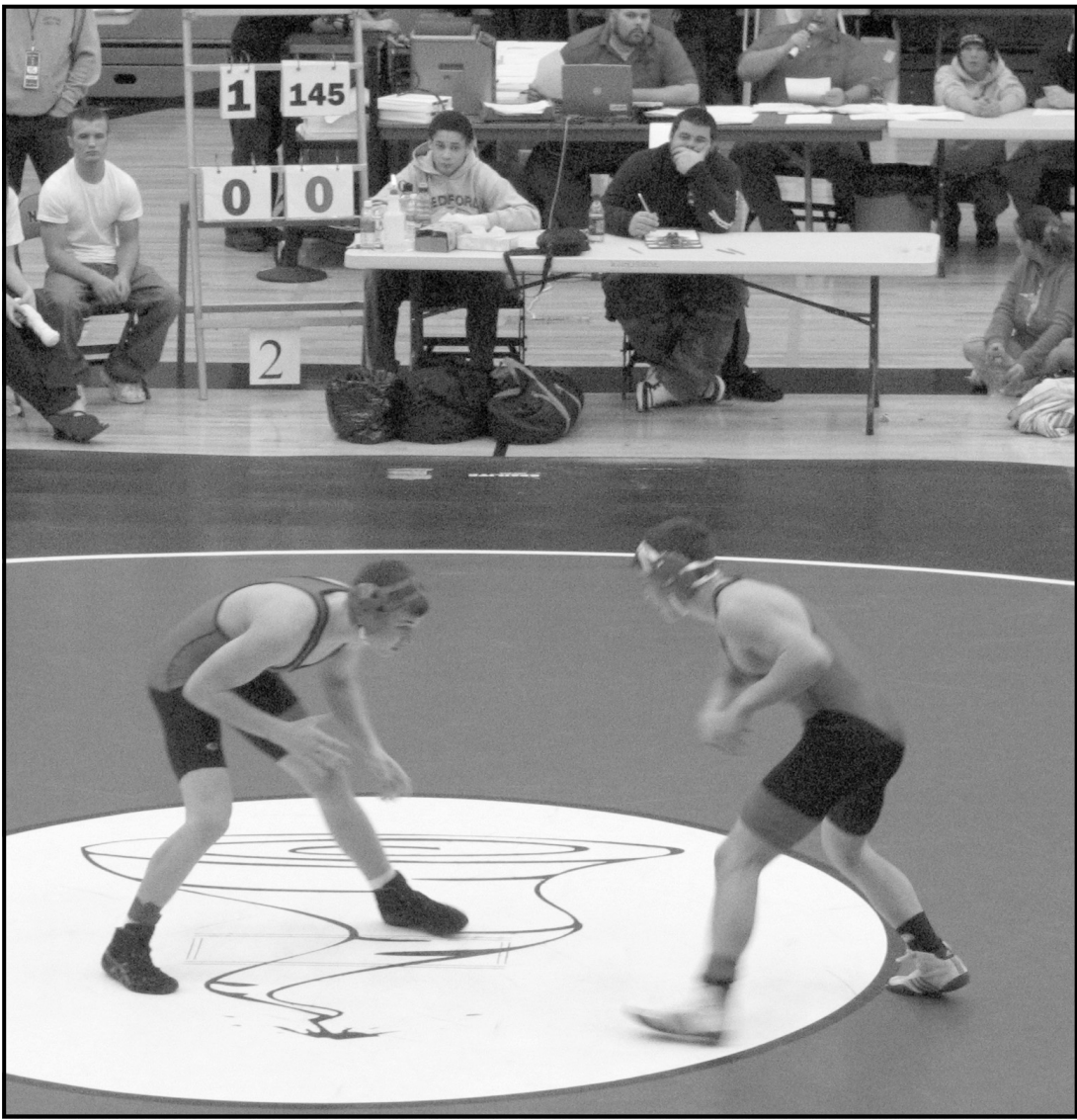
would go toward funding health care for all of Oregon’s uninsured children. Maurer said that he will not support such an increase, due to a campaign promise.

“During the election, I said I would not vote for increased cigarette taxes; so I won’t,” he said.

Maurer added that there is a hope that tax increases may be avoided during the legislative session. Democrats hold a narrow 31-29 majority in the House, which is not enough to raise taxes on party-line votes.

“A tax increase requires a 3/5 majority of the House, which is 36 votes,” he said. “They don’t have 36 votes,” Maurer continued, so, “It’s possible that there are some of those measures that may get the political will to implement, but that remains to be seen.”

ILLINOIS VALLEY COUGARS captured fifth place at the Rogue Valley Tournament in Medford on Saturday, Dec. 30 from among 14 participating schools. I.V. wrestlers amassed 170 points. Roseburg was first with 319.5, Crater second with 285, Grants Pass third with 203.5, and Phoenix was fourth with 197. For the Cougars Jesse Swift and Jerad Miller (right) square off for first place in the 145-pound class. Swift took first, Miller second. Also for I.V. Chris Culver was third at 103, Quayde Fisher sixth at 125, Sam Winter third at 135, Jacob Miller second and T.J. Parker sixth at 140, and Anthony Miller was second at 171. The Cougars were to face Phoenix in Ken Mann Memorial Gym Thursday, Jan. 4. (Photo by Ward Winter)



Don’t gamble with gambling -- for many a risky business

The following is by Jeff Marotta (503) 945-9709, problem gambling services manager in the Oregon Dept. of Human Services.

Has Santa’s workshop moved to Las Vegas, Nev.?

During the just-passed holiday season there was an annual marketing onslaught of gambling-related toys, books and paraphernalia. My current favorite example is the Pink Poker Night “It’s A Chick Thing” kit, where for \$29.95 you can have “everything a chick needs to host a fabulous girls’ night in.”

So what’s the fuss? I received this e-mail from a concerned mother of two:

“I want to know how much I should be worrying about gambling and the health of my kids. They watch poker tournaments on TV, their friends wear clothing with references to poker, and I heard my son talk about playing poker with friends ... What is a mother to do?”

She is not alone in wondering about the effects of continuing exposure to gambling. Today’s is the first generation to grow up in a society where gambling is widely accepted; advertising is ubiquitous; and gambling activities are commonplace.

Research indicates that 60 to 90 percent of youth engage in gambling, and

that youth problem gambling rates are two to four times higher than those of adults. Surveys of Oregon teen-agers tell us drugs, alcohol and gambling often travel together, yet many parents see gambling as a relatively safe pastime and encourage it as an alternative activity.

I told the concerned mom that, although we don’t know the ultimate effects of today’s gambling popularity, we do know that children and adults can and do get caught up in gambling in a way that is harmful to themselves and others around them.

This is not to say that if your child is gambling you need to panic -- most kids engage in some form of gambling and most don’t develop gambling problems. But you do need to recognize that gambling carries risk and approach it accordingly, as you would tobacco use, drug use or fastening your car’s seatbelt.

What do you look for if you’re concerned your child might have a problem? Watch for signs such as lying about gambling, gambling superseding other activities, using money to gamble that’s supposed to be used for other things, borrowing money to gamble, or stealing and letting schoolwork suffer.

Another suggestion I gave the concerned mom was to talk to her kids about gambling using these simple guidelines:

*Notice opportunities to discuss gambling. Help children make sense out of what they see on television, in the news and in the community.

*Discuss rules and expectations for behavior, and follow through with consequences.

*Be specific. When you talk about gambling, mention examples such as buying a lottery ticket, betting on a sports event, playing bingo.

*Be clear about your own values but avoid sweeping statements (all gambling is bad) or threats (“If I ever catch you betting money...”). Kids feel immortal, so scaring them doesn’t work; threats invite rebellion.

*Emphasize balance and choice. Facing choices about gambling and other risky behaviors can be a good way to practice making good decisions about many life issues.

As a parent, you play the most important role in preventing problem gambling behaviors in your children. You may want to think twice before buying your daughter a “Pink Poker Night” set or, for that matter, any one of the hundreds

of gambling products that will be advertised.

A better gift is talking to your kids about the risks of gambling and helping them understand the best bets made in life aren’t made in card games.

For additional information on youth gambling, visit the DHS Problem Gambling Services Web site: www.oregon.gov/DHS/addiction/gambling.shtml or phone the Oregon Problem Gambling Help Line at (877) 2-STOP-NOW.

2 hurt in Merlin plane crash

Two residents of Williams were taken from their airplane after it crashed at the Grants Pass Airport in Merlin on Friday, Dec. 29, said Josephine County Sheriff’s Office, (JCSO).

Rescued were Hal Averty, 78, and Randy Averty, 47.

The crash was reported at 2:33 p.m. at the north end of the runway. JCSO, American Medical Response, and Rural/Metro Fire Dept. responded, said JCSO. Data about the type of craft or who was the pilot were not provided.

The two men were taken to Three Rivers Community Hospital in Grants Pass. FAA and the National Transportation Safety Administration are to investigate details of the crash.

Energy savings = tax credits

Saving energy -- whether it’s in the family car, at home or at your place of work -- has become such an important part of our nation’s long-term goal of energy independence that tax credits are available for ordinary citizens making energy-wise decisions.

Consumers making substantial home renovations can receive a tidy check from Uncle Sam if they shop and buy carefully. Additionally, some states offer

their own tax credits for energy efficient homes, vehicles and equipment.

“The new Federal Energy Policy Act includes a variety of ways that businesses as well as individual consumers can take advantage of government tax credits and tax deductions,” said Jeff Stokes, vice president of World Energy Solutions (symbol WEGY), an energy services company based in St. Petersburg, Fla. (NewsUSA)

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- Confucius -