

THATCHER, continued from Page A1

years once the initiative has become law.

SB 534 would increase the percentage of money that school districts must transfer to charter schools for students in special education programs. An Oregon Department of Education rule currently requires school districts to pay at least 20 percent less for each student at an alternative school. Approval of this bill would appear to create equal payments for at least those students in special education programs.

KT: Is there a specific ongoing problem you are seeking to address or was there another motivation behind this bill?

Brecht: The goal here is to provide charter schools with a similar funding mechanism the public schools receive when admitting students with special needs, and help students and whatever school they choose to attend. Oregon and Federal law mandates that all schools admit students with special needs. This bill puts charter schools on similar footing as far as state funding is con-

cerned.

SB 540 would require community college or public university to expel any student convicted of riot.

KT: What was the motivation for taking up this issue? Were other punitive avenues considered such as restricting financial assistance to such students?

Brecht: Sen. Thatcher introduced this bill in the 2015 session. I think part of the motivation for this bill is that there have been a couple constituents that asked for this bill. There is a clear distinction between riot and peaceful protesting. This is about making the law clear: If you are a student and incite or participate in a riot, you can expect to be expelled, period. Inciting violence, and damaging or stealing private property does not reflect the values of any institution of higher learning that I am aware of and students should be held accountable to live up to those values.

SB 545 would require state agencies to use the federal E-Verify program to check on the eligibility of job applicants to seek employment. Essentially, it is a check on legal residency in the U.S.

KT: There are widespread reports that the E-Verify system is cumbersome and difficult to use, would it be better to wait until those issues have been corrected? Concerns have also been raised about E-Verify registering "false positives" for people without residency issues.

Brecht: This bill only applies to state agencies, not private employers. In that regard, it is a test program to ensure the state is able to navigate the system properly and follow federal rules about the employment of undocumented workers. As far as the "false positives" are concerned, there are due process steps already implemented within E-verify.

SB 548 authorizes Oregon sheriffs to issue concealed handgun licenses (CHLs) to any Oregon resident regardless of whether they live in the county where the license is issued. Currently, sheriffs can only issue CHLs to those who live in their county.

KT: What barriers is this removing, if any?

Brecht: This simply allows someone trying to get their CHL, to be able to apply in a county that they do not reside. One of the problems that varies from county to

Some of Sen. Kim Thatcher's other sponsored bills submitted before the start of the 2017 session include:

SB 533 – Would require those with a pending insurance claim or seeking damages for injury resulting from an accident or crime submit a written notice to the health care providers owed debts.

SB 535 – Would require that just compensation for condemned property not be less than the real market value determined by the Department of Revenue.

SB 536 – Would require that school districts allow students from charter schools and virtual charter schools to participate in interscholastic activities.

SB 542 – Would make it a crime to patronize a trafficked child. Punishable by a maximum of 10 years' imprisonment, \$250,000 fine, or both, if victim is child under 18 years of age. Punishable by maximum of five years' imprisonment, \$125,000 fine, or both, if conviction is based on offer by or to law enforcement officer posing as child under 18 years of age.

SB 543 – Creates a tax credit for employers that provide paid family leave. Eligible employers would have to have at least 50 employees with a credit ceiling amounting to 50 percent of the paid family leave wages paid during a given tax year.

SB 544 – Would permit the state to render void benefit requirements imposed by cities, counties, districts or other public corporations. Salary and wages are excluded from the state's ability to exempt a private employer.

SB 550 – Would create a rebuttable presumption that equal parenting time is always in the best interest of a child when child custody is in dispute.

county is backlogs with issuing CHLs. This gives citizens the ability to go to a county that may not have a backlog.

Get out of town on trip with K/SAS

Keizer/Salem Area Seniors has announced day trips and longer excursions for its spring 2017 travel offers. The trips are designed for seniors and are primarily promoted to members of K/SAS. For information on any of the trips call 503-390-7441.

March 6-9: Snow Train—Sacramento to Reno.

March 14-18: Five Days in Tucson, Arizona. Via Oregon West Excursions, 503-585-3979. Call for availability.

March 21-23: "Oceania in View." Two full days tracing 1805 Lewis and Clark journey with history. Final payment due by Feb. 15.

April 17-23: Thunder Over Louisville. Celebrate the kickoff to the Kentucky Derby. Via Oregon West Excursions, 503-585-3979. Call for availability.

May 1-8: Savannah and the Golden Isles. Savannah, Charleston and Jekyll Island in Georgia. Via Oregon West Excursions, 503-585-3979. Call for availability.

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Anyone who suffered through this summer's hot days would be excused for thinking of adding a cooling system to their home for the future. They would also be excused for wanting the most efficient heating system in their home. It's important to live comfortably; it's also important to be money smart.

Clean Energy Comfort, which recently relocated to Keizer from Salem is a leading provider of home heating and cooling systems. Their focus is to help customers achieve a maximum comfort level in their home, while minimizing energy usage. Company president Chris Romine, vice president Gayle Tunnell and their expert technicians achieve this through properly sizing a comfort system to match the needs of the home, and then tailoring the system to meet the desires of the homeowner.

Their mission is to be at the forefront of the HVAC industry by continually implementing new ideas and products, and by keeping their employees up to date with continued education and training. They will maintain sustainability, and continue to serve their valued customers for many years to come.

The company approaches their business from an educational perspective. They help their customers make the best decision for their homes. They aim to quickly take care of their customers needs and provide high-rated products that their customers can trust.

The business started in Salem in early 2011 and are now enjoying their large space at 3816 River Road.

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