

Post's bills for police dog rescue, veteran's benefits taking shape

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Rep. Bill Post has a number of bills that are making their way through the Legislature this year, but he said the most unusual thing is simply the climate in which everything takes place. Committee meetings, public hearings and most interactions between legislators are all virtual because of pandemic restrictions.

"It's just very strange from the way we've done business in the past," Post said. The pressure from some constituents to stage a walkout and prevent work from getting done is also high.

"Here's the thing, which bill do we walkout on? Is it for gun bills? Is it for prescription bills? Is it for timber tax? Pick one," Post said. In 2020, Republicans in the Legislature staged a walkout over proposed cap-and-trade regulations on harmful emissions, the same tactics are being called for presently over other issues.

"We walked out because cap and trade would have fundamentally changed the economy of Oregon forever, but it's a nuclear option and it should be used wisely and carefully," Post said.

Of the bills he sponsored that are continuing apace, Post said one has garnered surprising levels of support while another addresses an oversight for veterans.

The bill garnering surprising support is HB 2650, which would permit emergency services to emergency transport for police dogs injured in the line of duty. Services would only be offered to canines if there are no humans requiring transport. The bill cleared House hurdles with a unanimous vote of all members aside from 13 who had excused absences.

Post is hopeful House Joint Memorial (HJM) 2, the memorial would recognize U.S. Armed Forces service members who participated in the clean-up from nuclear testing on Enewetak



Cactus Crater on Runit Island in Enewetak Atoll holds 110,000 cubic yards of radioactive contaminated soil and 6,000 cubic yards of contaminated debris. Rep. Bill Post sponsored a bill advocating for service members who participated in the clean-up to receive an expansion of their Veterans Administration benefits. Submitted photo

Atoll. About 6,000 service members, between 1962 and 1980, were exposed to radiation-contaminated soil, concrete and military equipment while living on the islands for six-month stretches. Because those who participated in the clean-up are not considered "atomic veterans" they are not eligible to receive compensation for their exposure.

The memorial action calls for recognition of the soldiers' clean-up efforts by the U.S. Congress and urges the body to extend "atomic veteran" status to those that took part.

ALLERGY,

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Hoping not to jinx the bill's chances, Post isn't planning any celebrations just yet.

Oregon is the last state in the nation to require prescriptions for medication containing pseudoephedrine. Mississippi was the other holdout and it reversed course last month.



Rep. Post

Oregon's path to this point began in 2005 when the federal Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act of 2005 was incorporated into the Patriot Act signed into law in 2006. The act imposed limitations on the amount of pseudoephedrine in a pill and instituted electronic tracking of purchases.

At the same time, Oregon was in the midst of a heightened methamphetamine crisis. Pseudoephedrine and other similar medications could be converted into methamphetamine through a dangerous chemical process.

To combat the number of methamphetamine labs cropping up in the state, Oregon lawmakers began requiring prescriptions for drugs that could be used to produce meth. While the effort curbed production in Oregon and other states, Mexican cartels picked up the slack with more potent and cheaper versions of the addictive drug.

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