

Police, civil rights leaders voice support for data collection on race

Information would be taken at traffic stops

By **PARIS ACHEN**
Capital Bureau



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian
Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum, shown here speaking at the Columbia Forum, is behind a bill to address racial profiling.

SALEM — After years of disagreement, Oregon law enforcement and civil rights leaders voiced support Monday for a bill that would require police to record data on race during traffic stops.

The legislation, proposed by Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum, is aimed at addressing racial profiling by law enforcement.

“The legitimacy of our law enforcement depends on public perception, and there is no accountability mechanism better than sunshine,” Rosenblum testified during a hearing in the state House Judiciary Committee. “The experience of other states suggests that law enforcement is often quick to change their policies when confronted with data suggesting disparate impact on diverse communities.”

ducted or a person is arrested. The Oregon Criminal Justice Commission would analyze the data for any enforcement disparities and publish any trends in an annual report. Finally, the information would be distributed at a public forum in the law enforcement agency’s county of jurisdiction.

Several law enforcement agencies already collect such data voluntarily. Since 2000, Oregon State Police has been recording data on race, gender, age, reason for contact, citation, warning or search type.

“OSP does believe data collection has value in terms of guiding good policing policy and a critical foundation for discussions relating to policing concerns,” said Oregon State Police Superintendent Travis Hampton. “Before we have the conversation, I think we do need the data.”

Oregon State Police data shows that 2.1 percent of trooper contacts were with people identified as black, which is proportionate with the population. But in Multnomah County, court records show that blacks are 10 times

more likely to be charged with a drug-related crime, according to a Portland Tribune report.

Racial profiling

“Though today we don’t say that black people have to sit in the back of the bus, we don’t say that they don’t have access to public education or housing or health care, what we do say is that black people are criminal, and we will criminalize them at every step in the process,” said Jo Ann Hardesty, president of NAACP Portland.

Hardesty said the bill would be a good step toward addressing racial profiling.

“Oregon is not the only state that has disparate outcomes for people of color every step of the way, ... but it is the only state that pretends it’s progressive,” Hardesty said at Monday’s hearing. “I am here today to encourage you to live up to what you think you are and actually do something that is going to have a significant impact on people’s lives.”

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Ballot measure would restrict abortion rights

New initiative would block state funding

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Petitioners were granted permission last month to gather signatures to put a measure restricting state funding for abortions on the ballot in November 2018.

The effort, Initiative Petition 1, would amend the state’s constitution to prohibit spending public funds for abortions, with certain exceptions, according to the Secretary of State’s Office.

The petition would allow public funds to be spent in circumstances where federal law requires states to provide funding for the procedure or when the procedure is “medically necessary.”

Abortions and vasectomies are excluded from coverage required under the Affordable Care Act, the federal health care law that is under threat of repeal in Congress.

A group of Democratic lawmakers in the state House of Representatives this session is sponsoring legislation — called the Reproductive Health Equity Act — that

would require health plans, except for those that are offered by religious employers, to cover abortions and vasectomies. It would also maintain no-cost birth control in the state.

The petition was approved for circulation in February. The petition needs 117,578 signatures to get on the ballot next year.

Similar petitions were filed in 2012, 2014 and 2016, but failed each time to qualify for the ballot.

Supporters of the initiative petition, in comments submitted to the Secretary of State’s Office, argue that Oregonians who oppose abortion should not be obligated to fund the procedure through taxes.

Mary Nolan, executive director of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon, said in a statement that limitations on abortion would negatively affect low-income women, immigrants, young women and women of color in the state.

“When a woman is living paycheck to paycheck, denying coverage can push her deeper into poverty,” Nolan said.

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State lawmakers push to protect pot users’ info

By **KRISTENA HANSEN**
Associated Press

SALEM — State lawmakers worried about a nationwide crackdown on legal marijuana under President Donald Trump’s administration are rushing to protect the personal information of pot customers in case federal agents try to seize it.

A bipartisan group of lawmakers is taking one of the first direct state actions in response to White House spokesman Sean Spicer suggesting a boost in enforcement of federal anti-marijuana laws.

U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions has said the Justice Department is reviewing an Obama-era memo giving states flexibility in passing marijuana laws.

The committee that crafts Oregon’s pot policies has proposed legislation that requires marijuana businesses to destroy customers’ personal information, such as names, addresses and birth dates, gathered for marketing purposes, within 48 hours.

“I could see where the federal government would come in and try to gather this information from businesses that

have stockpiled it and retained it in their records,” said state Sen. Floyd Prozanski, D-Eugene, a bill sponsor who is also a prosecutor. “I think we as legislators have a duty to protect our citizens.”

Eight states and the District of Columbia have legalized marijuana for recreational use. Shops that sell the drug are open in four states and are required to check IDs to verify that customers are at least 21.

But many in Oregon go further, keeping an internal log of customers’ personal details to promote their product, including special deals and discounts

on birthdays. Some dealers even log driver’s license numbers to track each marijuana product a person buys and on which dates, which helps customers buy an item again even if they forget its name.

Colorado and Alaska prohibit retaining that private information. It’s also frowned upon, although not illegal, in Washington state.

“The reason we keep that information is to reach out to them — it’s marketing, just like any retailer,” said Donald Morse, executive director of the Oregon Cannabis Business Council.

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