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OUR VIEW

Real ID bill needs approval before end of session

As the Oregon Legislature's session winds down, lawmakers must not forget to pass Senate Bill 374, which would bring the state into compliance with the federal Real ID Act. The bill is currently in the hands of a Senate subcommittee.

The Real ID act, passed in 2005, increased the required documentation for issuing driver's licenses and identification cards, with the goal of thwarting terrorism. But many states, including Oregon, balked at implementing changes because no federal funding was available to cover the states' additional costs.

Since then the federal government has been issuing compliance waivers to Oregon and other states. But Oregon's waiver expires in June, and it will leave card-carrying Oregonians in the lurch by 2020 if the Legislature doesn't act. The biggest impact of noncompliance will be on those hoping to board a plane, which isn't allowed without approved identification. In other words, it would take a passport for an Oregon resident to board a flight — even a domestic one. It would also restrict access to some federal facilities and military installations.

The Transportation Security Administration, which oversees airport security, intends to stop accepting IDs from noncompliant states on Jan. 22, 2018. Residents of states that are in compliance have until Oct. 21, 2020, before being required to show the Real ID compliant identification.

While the bill in the Oregon Senate is more of a bandage than a full cure for the problem, it creates a path to a future solution while meeting the federal requirements of the present. It would allow Oregonians to pay extra to go through the additional steps and obtain a Real ID, while directing the Department of Motor Vehicles to set up a program to provide the enhanced IDs.

In short, it will give Oregonians who want to board a plane but not hassle with a passport the ability to do so, and also push the state closer to making the IDs available to everyone. It's not perfect — but without it those who aren't aware will be furious when they arrive at airport security and cannot pass.

The bill has gone through the bulk of the legislative process with a public hearing and work sessions, but it now resides in the Senate's Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development. The subcommittee needs to act, and the bill needs to proceed.

Earlier this month, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee signed a measure that will bring that state into compliance, one of 25 states and the District of Columbia that have done so. Oregon needs to join the compliance club too, and soon.

Seaside made right choice on zoning for housing project

For once, NIMBY didn't win.

Seaside city councilors should be applauded for taking a potentially unpopular step with the greater good in mind in approving a zoning change along North Wahanna Road for a housing project.

The change will apply to 3.75 acres owned by James Folk between North Wahanna Road and the wetlands along Stanley Lake for what could become a five-building, 40-unit apartment complex or up to 10 duplexes.

While neighbors cited potential environmental and traffic issues that could be connected to the zoning change, city councilors in last week's meeting referred to the need for additional housing in the city and acknowledged that not everyone will be happy with the decision.

Councilor Dana Phillips pointed out that the council had recently spent "two days of public goal-setting, and we need additional housing in this community."

Councilor Seth Morrisey added that, "Anytime we can expand, anywhere we try to increase density or place housing, there's going to be people who aren't going to like where it's at."

Folk had previously said traffic impacts should be minimal, and he pledged that his project will not damage trees or harm the wetlands habitat.

The vote was 5-0 with Mayor Jay Barber not present and Councilor Steve Wright recusing himself.

While the council's step won't cure the region's housing crunch, it's a move in the right direction. It came with the political will of facing the NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) issue that's been prevalent throughout the region. Seaside's councilors led by example, and leaders in the county and other cities should take note.



SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

The women pioneers of Seaside Rotary

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

Thirty years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a landmark decision: Rotary clubs may not exclude women



from membership on the basis of gender.

The vote followed the decade-long efforts of men and women from all over the Rotary world to allow for the admission of women.

Seaside Rotarian Laura Freedman was a member of the Arcadia club, "where the whole women's movement started in 1987."

She was the group's second female Rotarian. "We did not lose any members, but we had a lot of rumblings," Freedman said.

After the Supreme Court decision, Rotary clubs throughout the nation sought to rectify years of exclusion.

Rotarians in Seaside worked hard to recruit women. But even so, the transition was not without resistance.

In Seaside, Mary Blake was working as the general manager of the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District, a position she had held since 1984. She and banker Rhonda Wills attended their first meeting in May 1988.

"When I showed up to be inducted, half the people were gone," Blake said.

When she asked where they were, Blake said she was told, "They're golfing."

'Handwriting on the wall'

Today we don't think much of the outrages of the past. We accept that women always had the right to vote or a promotion at work.

While talking about the Greatest Generation honors those who served in World War II, there was a battle at home for gender equality that waged into the 1980s and beyond.

It was my mother's generation that changed that. Although she attended the University of Michigan and graduated cum laude, Marjorie was steered into a secretarial path that she was only able to break out of in the 1970s, and never, I think she would have agreed, reached her full potential.

Just as the battle for racial equality swept the nation, gender equality followed in its wake. No male bastions were more stubborn in lifting these barriers than the men's civic fraternal organizations that endorsed a separate but equal system — but God forbid no women standing at the bar.

At Seaside Rotary's recent 70th anniversary celebration at the Best Western, members of the organization stressed community — both local and international — and good works.

But as Society with a capital S dragged its feet, so did service clubs and by the 1980s the culture clash had reached the Supreme Court. The court ruled that the clubs had to take in members of both sexes and would be liable to discrimination lawsuits.

The court rejected Rotary International's argument that it has a constitutional right to bar the



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

Rhonda Wills and Mary Blake, Seaside's first women Rotarians.

admission of women as members of any affiliated club because of its selective membership policy, public service activities and other attributes, The New York Times reported after the May 1987 decision was delivered.

Eleanor Smeal, head of the National Organization for Women, hailed the decision as "the death knell for male-only clubs that are part of the business establishment. ... The handwriting is on the wall. These clubs are going to have to admit women."

Freedman subsequently became the Arcadia Rotary club's first woman president and knew she had "arrived" when one of the group's board members called her "one of the guys."

"When I was going to be the first woman president I had a little uprising from past presidents who wanted to make sure I was on board with what I was supposed to be doing," Freedman said. "They decided they were going to 'train me' in my presidential affairs."

A personal decision

After the Supreme Court decision, Rotary clubs throughout the nation sought to rectify years of exclusion. In Seaside, Blake said it was all "straight white men."

But City Manager Larry Lehman and Rotary's Fred Bassett felt Mary was the right choice to break barriers.

She had encountered gender discrimination in Portland at the Portland Bureau of Parks and Recreation and maintained a private personal life.

"It was a dangerous time having an alternative lifestyle," Blake recalled. "I said, 'Really, you guys don't want me in your club.'"

To make their case more persuasive, Blake said, Rotarian George Reimers "explained the larger piece of it" — the business networking, the international programs and educational scholarships — and even

offered to add a second woman member so "no one person would take the heat."

That woman was Wills.

"My husband Jim was the president," Wills said. "He also recruited a woman who was the manager of the U.S. Bank," Wills said. "She chickened out at the last minute."

The club meeting went on as normal. "When it was time to induct the women, there was a bunch of six or seven men who left," Rhonda Wills said. "They weren't going to be a party to this. And there was a whole contingent that didn't show up, and there were some who got up and left. It was disappointing. Some to this day hold a grudge, 30 years later."

Nevertheless, both women remained.

"I never had any question about coming back," Wills said. "It's a personal decision you have to make. (But) when you're in a professional situations, you have to make a lot of tough decisions."

"We all rolled up our sleeves, side by side doing everything together, sharing the work and the workload," Blake said. "I look at what the organization is built on, it's very powerful — that's what is so remarkable about Rotary. We all have the ability to contribute. And we're all eager to do that."

Last week, members of Rotary District 5100 arrived in Seaside for their annual conference. Among their speakers was Sylvia Whitlock of Duarte, California, the first female Rotary Club president. A fitting 30th anniversary to complement Seaside Rotary's 70th.

"I really felt it was my professional right to belong," Wills said. "I'm thinking it's worked out."

Today, her daughter is a Rotary member.

R.J. Marx is The Daily Astorian's South County reporter and editor of the Seaside Signal and Cannon Beach Gazette.