

WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

Trump bars transgender individuals from US armed forces

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is barring transgender people from serving in the military "in any capacity," citing "tremendous medical costs and disruption."

Trump's announcement this morning on Twitter did not say what would happen to transgender people already in the military.

The president tweeted that after consulting with "Generals and military experts," the government "will not accept or allow Transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the U.S. Military."

"Our military must be focused on decisive and overwhelming victory and cannot be burdened with the tremendous medical costs and disruption that transgender in the military would entail," he added.

At the Pentagon, members of the staff of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis appeared to have been caught unaware by Trump's tweets.

A Pentagon spokesman, Navy Capt. Jeff Davis, declined to answer questions about what Trump's tweets mean for the current policy, including whether transgender people already serving in the military will be kicked out.

"Call the White House," he said. Davis later released a statement, saying, "We refer all questions about the president's statements to the White House. We will continue to work closely with the White House to address the new guidance provided by the commander in chief on transgender individuals serving the military. We will provide revised guidance to the department in the near future."

The White House press office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Already, there are as many as 250 service members in the process of transitioning to their preferred genders or who have been approved to change gender within the Pentagon's system, according to several defense officials.

Petition against Washington distracted driving law started

TACOMA, Wash. — At least 18,000 people have decided that a Washington state law against distracted driving takes enforcement too far.

The News Tribune reported Tuesday that a petition to ban the law had gathered nearly 20,000 signatures just three days after it went into effect.

The law bans the use of handheld devices, including cell-phones and tablets while driving. But it also allows officers to issue additional tickets if the driver is pulled over for using a handheld device. Those additional \$99 tickets can be issued for behaviors such as eating, drinking or grooming while driving.

Many people who signed the petition wrote that they are unwilling to give up eating or drinking while driving.

State denies company request to bring back some Duck boats

OLYMPIA, Wash. — State regulators are — for now — denying a request from a Seattle tour company to once again begin using the type of duck boats involved in a 2015 crash that killed five college students and injured dozens more.

The Utilities and Transportation Commission said Tuesday that Ride the Ducks of Seattle has not shown that the amphibious "stretch duck" boats are safe.

One of the company's vehicles collided with a charter bus on Seattle's Aurora Bridge in 2015, resulting in the deaths of five people. Regulators suspended the company's operating permit but later allowed it to begin using another type of tour boat, which it refers to as "truck ducks."

Warming center: This season, the center hopes to be open for 90 days

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Everyone who testified in front of the Astoria Planning Commission during a long hearing Tuesday night — even the people who asked the commission to deny the warming center's request for a one-year conditional use permit — said the center was necessary.

But they disagree on where it should be located and what the effects its presence has on the surrounding community. For the past two years, the warming center has been based out of the basement of the First United Methodist Church, one block up from City Hall and downtown Astoria on Franklin Avenue, a street lined with apartments and homes.

The Planning Commission was split on the issue Tuesday. Commissioners decided to close the hearing but continue their deliberations at a meeting Aug. 1.

They hope that over the next week the warming center's volunteer board can begin to solidify a "good neighbor" agreement with the neighborhood and the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association and clarify other aspects of their operation before the commission decides whether or not to approve their application.

Concerns

Volunteers, church members and homeless people who have spent the night at the warming center praised the professionalism and service offered by the organization, saying it keeps people from dying of exposure on dangerously cold winter nights. They say the church is conveniently close to downtown and the basement is already set up to serve the homeless. Board President Dan Parkison said they looked at other buildings available in the area and there are few options so well-laden with the necessary infrastructure in place that also fit the center's limited budget.

But others worry about the warming center's presence in the neighborhood. They say the low-barrier center, where everyone is welcome and few questions are asked, is impacting quality of life in the neighborhood and threatens resi-



The Daily Astorian/File Photos
Volunteers Steve Swenson, left, and Rory Gerard, center, help check people into the warming center at First United Methodist Church in 2015.



People eat food while belongings sit next to their beds at the warming center at First United Methodist Church in November 2015. The center is seeing a conditional use permit to operate 90 days in a four-month period this winter.

dents' sense of safety. They complained about the large groups that congregate outside the church basement doors, waiting for the center to open, and about the trash and human waste sometimes found in yards nearby, the drug and alcohol use, and the noise.

Planning Commissioner Sean Fitzpatrick, who is one of the owners of an apartment complex across the street from the church, recused himself from the hearing. He said it was impossible for him to be impartial. In public testimony later, he urged the commission to deny the application.

"We did not see the issues that we have seen in the last three years prior to the opening of the warming center in the First United Methodist Church," said Anne Carpenter, Fitzpatrick's wife, who also testified.

While there is a need for the warming center, the neigh-

borhood has borne the negative effects of having it located there, she added.

Simple mission

The warming center operates with a simple mission: Get people off the streets on cold winter nights. It is a low-barrier center. It doesn't ask a lot of questions, and it lets in just about anyone, so long as they are not a danger to themselves or other people.

For the first two years of its existence, the center's operations were contained to severe weather days during the winter months when temperatures were predicted to dip below a given threshold. Last year, the board changed course and decided to be open for four months during the winter, unintentionally violating a 90-day limit for such operations.

This violation, combined with growing concerns by

neighbors and downtown businesses, triggered a closer look from the city and the requirement to obtain a one-year conditional use permit.

Parkison and the other board members believe the changes they are proposing this year could go a long way to addressing the neighborhood's concerns. They plan to have a litter patrol, conduct regular community meetings, change opening hours to reduce the number of people congregating outside in the evenings, supervise smoking breaks and make other changes. Despite some neighbors' fears, Parkison says the center has no plans to become a homeless shelter.

Last season, the center was open for 106 nights between Nov. 15 and Feb. 28. The center is only open in the evenings; people are not able to store belongings there during the day. This season, the center hopes to be open for 90 days during a four-month period beginning in November and ending in March.

They have the continued support of the First United Methodist Church's congregation. The homeless are also members of the community — neighbors — and they must care for them, they say.

"Open hearts, open minds and open doors," said Pastor Carol Prichard. She added, "We believe the church and the (warming center) are creative problem solvers and we can find ways to address the legitimate needs of all our neighbors."

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

TV LISTINGS

Evening listings WEDNESDAY

Table with columns for time slots (6 PM, 6:30, 7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30) and rows for various TV channels (KATU, KOMO, KOIN, KIRO, KGW, KRCW, KOPB, KPTV, KCPQ, TBS, KZJO, ESPN, ESPN2, NICK, DISN, FAM, FMC, LIFE, ROOT, F51, SPIKE, COM, HIST, A&E, TLC, DISC, NGE0, TMC, ANT, USA, FOOD, HGTV, FX, CNN, FNC, B1, BRAV, TCM, SYFY, RFD) listing their respective programs.

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