

# Governor renews push for more gun control

## Brown wants lawmakers to act next year

By **CLAIRE WITCOMBE**  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Gov. Kate Brown has renewed a push to tighten state laws restricting gun ownership.

Days after a deadly shooting in Las Vegas that took 58 lives and injured hundreds, Brown on Friday called on Oregon lawmakers to “put politics aside” and pass two proposals that failed in this year’s legislative session.

But it’s not apparent what will change lawmakers’ minds in the upcoming 35-day legislative session, which is due to begin in February.

One proposal would prevent a person from purchasing a firearm until Oregon State Police verify they are eligible to do so. As it stands, people in Oregon can still purchase a gun without a background check if OSP doesn’t verify them in 72 hours. This is often called the “Charleston loophole,” after the shooter in the Charleston church killings was able to purchase his gun in this manner.

Another proposal would expand the types of relationships that qualify for gun possession after a domestic violence conviction, which would close what is often called the “boyfriend” or “dating partner” loophole.

The governor’s proposal would also prohibit people convicted of misdemeanor stalking from buying firearms. “I look forward to work-

ing with the Legislature to finish what we started last session and close the Charleston and boyfriend loopholes for good,” Brown said in a written statement. “These policies will keep guns out of the wrong hands and help keep our promise to families across the state to keep our communities safe.”

Brown, a Democrat, is running for reelection in 2018.

State House Majority Leader Jennifer Williamson, D-Portland, indicated her support for the governor’s proposals Friday.

“For the safety of every Oregonian, it is vital that we ensure guns do not end up in the hands of individuals who would do harm to themselves or others,” Williamson said in a statement. “I look forward to working with Gov. Brown in the coming months to close



Pamplin Media Group  
**Gov. Kate Brown on Friday renewed calls for the Legislature to pass gun control measures.**

the Charleston and boyfriend loopholes.”

A spokesman for Williamson said she was unavailable to comment Friday on the viability of the legislation in the upcoming short session, or why it failed this year.

A spokesman for Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, did not respond to requests seeking comment about why the legislation did not pass this year.

State Sen. Ginny Burdick, D-Portland, a leading advocate for gun control, was unavailable for comment Friday afternoon, a spokesman said.

Burdick told Oregon Public Broadcasting on Friday that “we should be aiming for bills that have broad bipartisan support,” but that she would vote for the proposals if they reached the Senate floor.

Penny Okamoto, executive director of Ceasefire Oregon, a group that advocates for stricter standards for gun ownership and gun safety, said it wasn’t clear to her why the legislation did not pass this year.

“I could not tell you why a Democratic governor’s priority could not get through a Democratic House and a Democratic Senate,” Okamoto said Friday. Democrats hold the majority in both chambers.

In this year’s session, which concluded in July, lawmakers passed a bill that created a process for temporarily taking firearms away from people who were at risk of committing suicide.

Despite passing both chambers, it was not without objection.

Two Republican lawmakers sought to refer the legislation to the ballot, but announced Thursday they had not gathered sufficient signatures in time for the deadline.

Brown’s main challenger, state Rep. Knute Buehler, R-Bend, was quoted in The Bulletin last week saying that “deranged madmen won’t be deterred by another new law no matter how well-intended.”

*The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.*

# Tensions ramped up in Gearhart over vacation rental vote

## Accusations of sign stealing

By **R.J. MARX**  
The Daily Astorian

GEARHART — When she went to bed at midnight, Betty Smith said a campaign sign on her lawn opposing the repeal of a vacation rental ordinance was in place. By Saturday morning, it was gone, along with about 15 other signs from homes on Cottage and Marion avenues.

The signs advocated a “no” vote to Measure 4-188, which asks for a repeal and replacement of Gearhart’s short-term rental ordinance.

The missing signs were first reported Saturday afternoon, Police Chief Jeff Bowman said.

“It’s theft of property, no matter how you want to slice it,” said Smith, a former advertising director for The Daily Astorian, who lives on Cottage Avenue. “This was on our private property. ... These signs cost money.”

She said the thefts took place “probably between midnight and 6 a.m.”

“It’s not the first time,” Smith said. “When you lose 10 in one night, there’s clearly something going on.”

“We had the owner’s permission for every location,” Cottage Avenue resident Jeanne Mark said. “We were painstaking about that.”

Along with seeking return of the signs, Mark, Smith and others said they also plan to file reports with Gearhart Police.

“These signs cost money and theft is a serious charge,” Mayor Matt Brown said.

Sign stealing is a familiar accusation in political campaigns — from the presidential election down to the City Council — and culprits are rarely caught.

Bowman said residents may not have much recourse. The city does not take crime reports



Submitted Photo  
**Campaign signs vanished from homes along Cottage and Marion avenues in Gearhart this weekend.**

on stolen or vandalized campaign signs.

“That’s just the way it is throughout the county,” Bowman said. “During the Clin-

ton and Trump election there were all kinds of signs taken. Do you know how I handle it? I tell them, ‘Sorry, you got your political signs stolen, just go get another sign and put it up.’”

**Retribution feared**  
While Gearhart has been dotted with signs opposed to the ballot measure, signs in support are absent.

“We’re not putting up signs,” measure advocate David Townsend said last week.

Some proponents of the measure fear the heightened political tensions surrounding

the short-term rental regulation debate may incite anger or retribution.

“I walked down the Ridge Path and saw signs that said ‘Save Gearhart, vote no,’” resident Shannon Smith said at

Wednesday’s City Council meeting.

“There are business folks in town who have spoken up in favor of this and they have been retaliated against — the big ‘R’ word — or they’ve

been called names like ‘selfish and greedy,’” she said. “I don’t think anyone who wants their rights is selfish. We have to find a way to talk about it and make our community come together again.”

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