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ONE DOLLAR



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

District Attorney Josh Marquis supports a legal challenge to a new law that reduces the presumptive prison sentences for theft and identity theft.

## Marquis backs legal challenge to sentencing changes

Law reduces penalty for theft and identity theft

By **DERRICK DePLEDGE**  
*The Daily Astorian*

District Attorney Josh Marquis supports a legal challenge to a new Oregon law that softens prison sentences for theft and identity theft.

The law is among several steps the state has taken to contain spending to house inmates for drug and property crimes and avoid building new prisons. Starting in January, it lowers the presumptive sentence for theft and identity theft to 13 months, down from 18 months.

Clackamas County District Attorney John Foote and two crime victims filed a lawsuit in Circuit Court in Oregon City last week challenging the law. The suit claims the Legislature, under the state Constitution, needed two-thirds votes in the House and Senate to reduce criminal sentences approved by voters.

Measure 57, backed by voters in 2008, had increased prison sentences for drug and property crimes.

“I’m very supportive — for the record — of Mr. Foote’s lawsuit,” Marquis said in an email. “Many elected DAs support him against the Legislature’s attempt to overrule an overwhelming vote of the people in 2008 as disgraceful.”

Last summer, Marquis described the bill as “hocking a huge loogie into the face of Oregon’s voters” and predicted a legal challenge if it became law.

Along with lowering sentences for theft and identity theft, the law extended short-term transitional leave for prison inmates to 120 days before their scheduled release dates, up from 90 days.

The law also expanded the

eligibility criteria for the Family Sentencing Alternative Pilot Program, hoping to reduce the surge in the women’s prison population.

The reforms are part of Oregon’s justice reinvestment initiative, a strategy to control prison spending and confront recidivism. The state has urged counties to supervise more drug and property offenders locally through jail, probation and drug abuse and mental health treatment, reserving prison for violent criminals.

Some prosecutors, like Marquis, have resisted.

Foote’s lawsuit rests on the reach of Measure 10, a 1994 ballot initiative that amended the state Constitution to require the two-thirds threshold for the Legislature on bills that reduce criminal sentences approved by voters.

The suit claims the new law is invalid and unenforceable because the House and Senate fell short of the vote threshold. Foote and the crime victims also argue that the suit defends the integrity of the ballot initiative process.

David Rogers, executive director of the ACLU of Oregon, said in an email that Foote “is engaging in classic scare tactics with how he describes modest sentencing reforms, while ignoring what most people know. The war on drugs is a failure and property crime is largely driven by addiction. We won’t break the cycle of crime by focusing on longer sentences and prison expansion. We need to focus on increasing treatment and prevention.

“Mr. Foote says he is concerned about victims, but he is trying to stop a law that was going to invest a million dollars in victim services. He says the Legislature is not reflecting voter interests, but we don’t know any Oregonians that want to spend tens of millions of taxpayer dollars opening a new women’s prison.”

## BUILDING BRIDGES



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

U.S. and Chinese soldiers participate in disaster training drills at Camp Rilea on Saturday.

## Exercise tests disaster preparedness

By **JACK HEFFERNAN**  
*The Daily Astorian*

Soldiers from the U.S. and Chinese armies conducted disaster response drills at Camp Rilea last week, forming bonds in case of a major flood somewhere on the Pacific rim. It marked the first time the annual exercise — one of the few opportunities for collaboration between the two militaries — took place in Oregon.

Both soldiers and civilians took part in academic discussions, table-top exercises and field training in Portland and Camp Rilea from Monday through Sunday. Organizations like the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.S. Geological Survey also participated.

The event has evolved since the initial exercise 20 years ago. It centered on a theoretical scenario, but

drills and discussions were based on real-life data from a previous major flood in Peru.

“I learn something new every time that I participate,” said People’s Liberation Army Maj. Gen. Zhang Jian through a translator at a Sunday press conference. “This round ... is more practical.”

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U.S. and Chinese soldiers practice cutting through concrete.

## Longtime fire chief remembered

Boone recalled as mentor and community leader

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

SEASIDE — The firefighting community is mourning the loss of Bill Boone, who served as Hamlet’s fire chief for many years.

Boone, 66, died Nov. 4 after a battle with cancer.

Hamlet Fire Chief Matt Verley remembered Boone as a chief, teacher, mentor and friend.

“Countless people are alive today because of Bill’s efforts,” Verley said. “Even after decades on the department, Bill was often the first person to the station when the pager sounded at 2 a.m.”

Boone spent most of his life in Hamlet, running his general contracting business and serv-

ing the Hamlet fire department for more than 30 years. He was the husband of state Rep. Deborah Boone, who represents House District 32.

“It’s a huge loss for Hamlet community and the county,” Gearhart Fire Chief Bill Eddy said. “He did a lot for the community. I’ve known him for probably 15 to 20 years. He never got excited, took everything in stride, was proficient at what he did and if he had a question, he’d ask.”

Seaside Fire Chief Joey Daniels battled many blazes alongside Boone.

“He was a great man, and he was a mentor to all of us, especially to all of us fire chiefs,” Daniels said. County Commissioner Lianne Thompson, who represents Hamlet, was a longtime friend.

“Bill Boone was salt of the earth,” Thompson said. “Forty years with the Hamlet fire



Shelly Clooten

Paul Weaver, chairman of the board for the Hamlet Historical Schoolhouse, left, presents Hamlet Volunteer Fire Department Chief Bill Boone with a special award as a thank you for the “40 years and counting.”

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