

Brown to sign controversial tax bill

Governor wants tax break in special session

By **CLAIRE WITCOMBE**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Gov. Kate Brown says she'll sign a controversial business tax bill into law and wants to convene a special session of the Legislature to extend a tax break to sole proprietorships.

Oregon automatically conforms to the federal tax code unless state lawmakers pass legislation specifically to modify it. That's what lawmakers did with Senate Bill 1528. The legislation prevented own-

ers of so-called pass-through businesses — sole proprietorships, partnership, limited liability corporations and S-corporations — from deducting up to 20 percent of their business income from their 2018 state tax return. The deduction was created by the recent federal tax overhaul.

Brown wants lawmakers to convene to tweak Oregon law so that owners of sole proprietorships can receive special tax rates offered to other pass-throughs since 2013.

Brown contends that making those changes and disallowing the 20 percent deduction would make the tax system for small business more equitable.

"Through my review and analysis it has become appar-

ent that Oregon's existing preferred rate structure for pass-through entities, which is relatively new, is not perfect and has some inequities in it," Brown, a Democrat running for re-election, wrote in a bill signing letter Friday to Secretary of State Dennis Richardson. "... It is clear to me that sole proprietors ought to be allowed to participate in this preferred rate structure."

Lawmakers passed the bill in the last days of the recent short session to blunt the effects of the federal tax overhaul on Oregon's revenues. It is expected to raise \$244 million in the two-year budget cycle, which concludes in mid-2019.

Many Republicans in the Legislature and some mem-

bers of the business community had been vocal about their opposition to the bill and called on the governor to veto it.

In a press conference Friday, Brown noted that those business owners already receive special rates from the state and will be able to use the deductions on their federal returns. Brown said signing the bill "prevents a third

tax break at the expense of our schools, our children and our seniors."

Senate Republican Leader Jackie Winters, of Salem, disagreed, saying in a statement after Friday's announcement that "the right thing to do would be to veto this partisan tax increase on small business."

"Startups, mom and pop shops, and young entrepre-

neurs are doing great things for Oregon, but the majority party insists on passing an unfair tax increase that will stifle their growth, and harm the very Oregonians we should be helping," Winters said. "There is no budgetary need to raise taxes on small businesses."

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

Sailboat built by Oregon students continues journey to Japan

Associated Press

SITKA, Alaska — A miniature sailboat built by Scappoose sixth-graders has been put back out to sea to continue its voyage to Japan after running aground near Sitka, Alaska.

An Alaska fisherman discovered the boat in late February and reached out to teachers at Sitka schools, leading to students at Blatchley Middle School to take part in the international project, the Daily Sitka Sentinel reported.

Students at Otto Peterson Elementary School in Scappoose had launched the boat

in December as part of an educational project sponsored by the Columbia River Maritime Museum.

The Oregon students built 10 fiberglass vessels equipped with sails and GPS tracking devices. Half of the 5-foot boats were flown to Japan to three partner schools in the Aomori Prefecture where the vessels were deployed.

The project aims to teach students in both countries about ocean currents and different cultures as the boats sail across the Pacific Ocean.

After learning of the boat, Sitka science teacher Stacy Golden said she jumped at the

opportunity to have her class participate. The education director of the Columbia River Maritime Museum then flew to Sitka to explain the project to the students and help ready the boat for its next voyage.

Golden said the Sitka students dried out the boat, patched the keel and made some aesthetic upgrades. The boat was launched from Alaska on Wednesday and is now at the mercy of the wind and ocean currents to reach its destination.

"All of the sudden, they feel like they're part of something bigger," Golden said of her students.

Ferry passenger dies in Columbia River

Clatskanie Chief

A Coast Guard spokesperson has confirmed that a woman died after she fell off a ferry into the Columbia River on Friday night.

The spokesperson said Coast Guard crews pulled the woman's body from the river

after it was spotted from the ferry. The woman's identity was not released to the public.

The Coast Guard spokesperson said before she died the woman was aboard the ferry Oscar B. that travels between Westport and Puget Island in Washington state. Coast Guard units responded

at around 9:30 p.m.

The woman's death was "by all accounts a suicide," a Coast Guard spokesperson told The Daily News of Longview, Washington, on Saturday.

The woman's body was turned over to Ocean View Mortuary in Astoria.

APRIL 10TH Executive Artistic Director Kirk Mouser

A Columbia Forum Presentation



Kirk Mouser is the founder and executive artistic director of Stumptown Stages, a not-for-profit professional musical theater company in residence at the Portland's Centers for the Arts. Previously he served as the interim trust manager at the Oregon Cultural Trust where he implemented the "Days of Culture," and worked for the City of Gresham's Economic Development Department where he oversaw the development and fundraising efforts for the Center for the Arts Plaza.

Prior to returning to his hometown of Portland, Kirk spent twenty years in New York City where he served as the associate managing director of Luna Stage Company, a professional regional theatre in Montclair, New Jersey. As an actor, Kirk credits include the Broadway/national tours of Les Miserables, Forbidden Broadway, Chess, The Phantom of the Opera and Leonard Bernstein's Mass. He has also co-starred in the Hollywood feature film "Untraceable," and TNT's "Leverage."

Kirk currently serves on the Arts Alliance Foundation, Tourism Development Council and artPAC board. He received his BS in Business from Warner Pacific College, and his MBA at Marylhurst University.

TO ATTEND:

For Members: Dinner & Lecture: \$25 each; Lecture only: no charge

For Non-Members: Dinner & Lecture: \$35 each; Lecture only: \$15 ea.

Appetizers will be available at 6 p.m. • Dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m.

The speaker will begin after the dinner service is complete and non-dinner members and guests of the audience take their seats.

Forum to be held at the CMH Community Center at 2021 Exchange St., Astoria.



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