

Special session: Police reforms were overwhelmingly approved

Continued from Page A2

overwhelmingly approved by the Legislature on Friday — June 26, 2020.

A chief sponsor of the bills was Sen. Lew Frederick, D-Portland, one of the leaders of the People of Color Caucus that authored and carried the legislation.

At the end of the Senate session, Frederick rose to address his colleagues with a piece of history regarding the state's laws towards Black people.

"Sometimes we end up with coincidences that are pretty extraordinary — I think today is one of those," Frederick said. He then read a bit of history he had been handed earlier.

"On June 26, 1844, the legislative committee of the territory then known as the Oregon Country, passed the first series of Black exclusion laws. The law dictated that free African Americans were prohibited from moving into the Oregon Coun-



Oregon lawmakers met in special session last week.

try and those who violated the ban could be whipped by not less than 20, or no more 39 stripes."

Frederick paused, then thanked his colleagues for their support on the bills.

"We've moved a dis-

tance — not a lot, not as much as we need to, but we have moved a distance," he said.

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

Masks: 'Cases on the rise rapidly'

Continued from Page A1

Brown warned that government restrictions that have been lifted in many counties could return. "I do not want to have to close down businesses again like other states are now doing," she said. "If you want your local shops and restaurants to stay open, then wear a face covering when out in public."

Becky Hultberg, the president and CEO of the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems, supported Brown's decision.

"With cases on the rise rapidly across the state, it is now more important than ever to take this step to protect our loved ones, our neighbors and our communities," she said in a statement. "Further, if we are to coexist alongside the disease, wide adoption of public face coverings is an essential factor in keeping

our businesses and public spaces open."

Counties have been granted discretion by Brown in how to enforce the mask requirement.

Commissioner Kathleen Sullivan, the chairwoman of the Board of Commissioners, said wearing a mask in public is a small inconvenience that can help protect everyone.

"I take this pandemic very seriously and so I wear a mask because I want to protect the people around me," she said. "I don't want to be a part of the problem."

Sullivan said the county is continuing to work on the education piece of the mask requirement. She hopes wearing a mask in public can become part of people's everyday routine.

Warrenton Mayor Henry Balensifer said he is supportive of wearing masks in public, but was the

only mayor to oppose the county opting in to the mask requirement.

In a Facebook live video Friday night, the mayor said he would have preferred the county maintain local sovereignty and create its own mask guidance.

He said he is also not in favor of creating a requirement that is not enforceable.

"I think it's important that if you're going to do something, you should be prepared to enforce it. And if you don't, then you should call it guidance, because that's really what it is," Balensifer said.

"It's important in my mind that if you have laws that there is something to undergird that. And if people have an expectation that they're not going to be required to do something that's in the law, that undermines the rule of law, in my opinion."

Henry: Lived in same apartment for 40 years

Continued from Page A1

and died while he was in the service. He would ultimately serve three years in Vietnam, earning several awards, including the Bronze Star, and helping evacuate U.S. personnel from the country in 1975.

The award he remembers most, though, was the Purple Heart he earned after being struck by shrapnel near the front lines. Henry said he still remembers the four nurses standing around him with tweezers, alternately pulling bits of metal out of his body and joking, "He loves me. He loves me not."

After 20 years in the

Army, Henry retired to Florida but found it too hot and muggy. He started driving, searching for a new home, and ultimately landed in Astoria, where he's lived in the same apartment for the past 40 years.

After his stroke, physicians wanted him to move into a care home. Henry objected and instead got an in-home caregiver through Caring for the Coast.

"It's a relief," Henry said. "This is my apartment, and I'm not in one of these care facilities."

During his rehab, one of Henry's physical therapists noted how riding a bike might help him recover from his stroke.

Meredith Howell, who has been Henry's caretaker through Caring for the Coast for the past several years, started making calls. She eventually got Caring for the Coast, Bikes and Beyond, the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars to all chip in and get Henry his own bike, a blue recumbent that will fly the Purple Heart and American flag on the back.

"Lee tends to sleep a lot, but when he knows we're heading out, and we're going to be in the community and get some exercise, his whole demeanor changes," Howell said. "He's happy. We all know that exercise is good for our bodies."

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