

Obama explores unilateral steps on guns

Associated Press

HONOLULU — President Barack Obama is looking for ways to keep guns out of the hands of “a dangerous few” without depending on Congress to pass a law on the fraught subject of gun control.

He says he’ll meet his attorney general, Loretta Lynch, on Monday to see what executive actions might be possible. Steps to strengthen background checks could come this week.

“The gun lobby is loud and well organized in its defense of effortlessly available guns for anyone,” Obama said in his weekly radio address. “The rest of us are going to have to be just as passionate and well organized in our defense of our kids.”

He said he gets so many letters from parents, teachers and children about the “epidemic of gun violence” that he can’t “sit around and do nothing.”

Obama recently directed staff at the White House to look into potential executive actions.

Currently, federally licensed firearms dealers are required to seek background checks on potential firearm purchasers.

But advocacy groups say some of the people who sell firearms at gun shows are not federally licensed, increasing the chance of sales to customers prohibited by law from purchasing guns.

A source familiar with the admin-

istration’s efforts said Obama is expected to take executive action next week that would set a “reasonable threshold” for when sellers have to seek a background check. That person didn’t know whether it would be based on the number of guns sold or revenue generated through gun sales.

The source, a member of a gun control advocacy group, was not authorized to discuss details before the announcement and spoke on condition of anonymity. White House officials won’t confirm the timing.

In his efforts to work around a Congress that has often been politically gridlocked, Obama has made aggressive use of executive power, particularly on immigration. It has been an increasingly effective presidential tool. And while legal scholars are divided on whether Obama has accelerated or merely continued a drift of power toward the executive branch, there’s little debate that he’s paved a path for his successor.

Depending on who succeeds him, many Obama backers could rue the day they cheered his “pen-and-phone” campaign to get past Republican opposition in Congress.

The unilateral steps he took to raise environmental standards and ease the threat of deportation for millions of immigrants in the U.S. illegally may serve as precedent for moves they won’t cheer.

The National Rifle Association

opposes expanded background check systems. The organization’s Institute for Legislative Action says studies have shown that people sent to state prison because of gun crimes typically get guns through theft, the black market or family and friends.

Also, many purchases by criminals are made from straw purchasers who pass background checks. “No amount of background checks can stop these criminals,” says the group’s website.

Obama has consistently expressed frustration after mass shootings, saying it shouldn’t be so easy for somebody who wants to inflict harm to get his or her hands on a gun.

Going into his final year in office, Obama said his New Year’s resolution is to move forward on unfinished business.

“That’s especially true for one piece of unfinished business, that’s our epidemic of gun violence,” Obama said in his weekly address.

He said a bipartisan bill from three years ago requiring background checks for almost everyone had huge support, including among a majority of NRA households. But the Senate blocked it.

“Each time, we’re told that common-sense reforms like background checks might not have stopped the last massacre, or the one before that, so we shouldn’t do anything,” he said. “We know that we can’t stop every act of violence. But what if we tried to stop even one?”

BRIEFLY

Stayton teen critical after New Year’s accident

PORTLAND (AP) — Marion County deputies say a Stayton teen is in critical condition after a New Year’s Eve accident.

The *Oregonian* reports his car was ripped in half in the single-car accident near Stayton.

Firefighters extricated the driver, 17-year-old Timothy Colblentz, from the smashed-up vehicle, and he was taken to Stayton Memorial Hospital and later flown to OHSU. The sheriff’s office says he is expected to survive his injuries.

The accident occurred while he was returning home from a New Year’s Eve party at about 1:30 a.m. and lost control of his car, which struck a tree.

Deputies believe Colblentz was speeding. No citations have been issued.”

Federal judge rules in favor of Portland activist

PORTLAND (AP) — A federal judge has ruled in favor of a Portland activist who took the city to court after being removed from several City Council meetings over the years.

The *Oregonian* reports that U.S. District Court Judge Michael H. Simon ruled Thursday that Portland Mayor Charlie Hales violated the activist’s First Amendment rights by barring him from meetings for months at a time.

Simon ordered the city to halt all prospective exclusions against the activist, 73-year-old Joe Walsh.

He wrote in a 28-page ruling that Hales has the authority to maintain decorum, but not to order prolonged exclusions from a forum intended for public discourse.

The city maintained that Walsh was thrown out for

being disruptive, and not for any view or opinion he expressed.

The mayor’s spokeswoman, Sara Hottman, declined to comment Thursday.

Man on bicycle killed by car in Monmouth

MONMOUTH (AP) — Polk County authorities are investigating a fatal bicycling accident in Monmouth.

The *Statesman Journal* reports a 52-year-old Independence man was riding a bicycle on Wednesday evening when he was struck and killed by car on the outskirts of Monmouth.

The cyclist, identified as John Shapley, was struck from behind while riding his bike. The investigation showed a second vehicle hit Shapley, but officials didn’t think it was a factor in his death.

Authorities say the first vehicle was driven by 40-year-old Daniel Major, of Falls City.

No criminal charges have been filed.

Seattle minimum wage moved toward \$15

SEATTLE (AP) — Seattle’s minimum wage took another step toward \$15 an hour on January 1.

Depending on the size of the business and whether the employees have health insurance, workers in Seattle will make as much as \$13 an hour minimum in 2016.

The statewide minimum in Washington is \$9.47 an hour for the second year. It will no longer be the highest in the nation, as Massachusetts and California are both increasing to \$10. Alaska’s minimum wage also is higher than Washington’s, going up to \$9.75 an hour on Friday.

Oregon lottery officials say security, technology remains strong

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The likelihood of winning a lottery jackpot is less than dying in a plane crash, catching a flesh-eating bacteria or being duped by a corrupt lottery employee.

The integrity of lottery games nationwide are in question amid an investigation into jackpot fixing that started in Iowa and has spread to at least four other states, Colorado, Wisconsin, Oklahoma and Kansas, according to The Associated Press.

There is no information that games offered in Oregon have been compromised, said Oregon Lottery spokesman Chuck Baumann.

The investigation stems from accusations that a former security director at the Urbandale, Iowa-based Multi-State Lottery Association installed root kit software on the association’s random number generators to find out winning numbers in advance, The Associated Press reported.

Former security director Eddie Tipton, who worked for MUSL for 11 years, was convicted in July of fraud for working with associates to try to claim a \$16.5 million Hot Lotto jackpot he

had rigged in Iowa. He has since been charged with criminal conduct and money laundering involving lotteries in Colorado, Wisconsin and Oklahoma, The Associated Press reported.

The nonprofit lottery association administers a variety of lottery games in 44 states, including Hot Lotto, Wild Card, Powerball and Mega Millions.

The only MUSL-administered games Oregon participates in are Powerball and Mega Millions, Baumann said. The winning numbers for those games are selected in a live televised drawing. The Powerball drawing is held at Universal Studios in Orlando, Fla. The process is the same for Mega Millions except that the drawing takes place in Atlanta, Ga.

Idaho Lottery Director Jeff Anderson, chairman of the MUSL board, did not immediately respond to messages inquiring whether Tipton had access to lottery equipment or computers outside of Iowa, where MUSL is based.

Oregon’s Game Megabucks uses an International Game Technology random number generator to yield winning combinations. That computer is housed at the Oregon Lottery headquarters in Salem. The random number

generator is a stand-alone computer under 24-hour video surveillance and is not part of the Oregon Lottery’s central computer system, Baumann said.

International Game Technology and Oregon State Police Lottery Security Section evaluate and monitor the security controls, he said.

The random number generator “has no knowledge of the ticket number combinations that have been purchased for any of the drawings,” Baumann said. At draw time, the lottery’s central computer system, with no human involvement “asks” the random number generator for the set of winning numbers, he said.

An independent testing laboratory also certifies the number generator at random, he said.

He did not immediately have information about how many people have access to the random number generator.

Geoff Greenwood, spokesman for the Iowa Attorney General, said that office would notify proper authorities of any alleged illegal activity in other states that might be discovered during the course of its investigation.

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AccuWeather.com Forecast

| TODAY | SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| COLD | COLD | | | |
| Freezing fog; very cold | Freezing fog with a little snow | A little icy mix in the p.m. | Occasional afternoon rain | Times of sun and clouds |
| 25° 15° | 26° 21° | 30° 22° | 34° 27° | 36° 24° |
| 25° 17° | 27° 22° | 31° 24° | 35° 29° | 38° 27° |

ALMANAC

PENDLETON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

| TEMPERATURE | HIGH | LOW |
|-------------|------------|-------------|
| Yesterday | 23° | 20° |
| Normals | 40° | 26° |
| Records | 67° (1939) | -12° (1979) |

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. Trace
Month to date Trace
Normal month to date 0.06"
Year to date 0.06"
Last year to date 0.00"
Normal year to date 0.06"

HERMISTON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

| TEMPERATURE | HIGH | LOW |
|-------------|------------|-------------|
| Yesterday | 26° | 22° |
| Normals | 39° | 27° |
| Records | 60° (1959) | -13° (1979) |

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date 0.00"
Normal month to date 0.04"
Year to date 0.00"
Last year to date 0.00"
Normal year to date 0.04"

SUN AND MOON

| | |
|----------------|------------|
| Sunrise today | 7:36 a.m. |
| Sunset tonight | 4:22 p.m. |
| Moonrise today | 12:13 a.m. |
| Moonset today | 11:56 a.m. |

| | New | First | Full | Last |
|--|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Jan 9 | Jan 16 | Jan 23 | Jan 31 |

REGIONAL FORECAST

Coastal Oregon: Mostly sunny today. Occasional rain and drizzle tonight, except dry across the north.

Eastern and Central Oregon: Freezing fog this morning; otherwise, clouds and sun today with the most in the south.

Western Washington: Mostly sunny today; patchy morning fog in central parts. Mainly clear tonight.

Eastern Washington: Low clouds and freezing fog may break today. Partly to mostly cloudy tonight with patchy freezing fog.

Cascades: Plenty of sun, but cold today. Becoming cloudy tonight with some snow spreading into the south.

Northern California: Some sun today. Cold in the interior mountains; a shower at the coast late.

REGIONAL CITIES

| | Today | | | Sun. | | |
|---------------|-------|----|----|------|----|----|
| | Hi | Lo | W | Hi | Lo | W |
| Astoria | 43 | 30 | s | 43 | 36 | r |
| Baker City | 17 | 7 | pc | 27 | 18 | sn |
| Bend | 24 | 10 | s | 33 | 22 | sn |
| Brookings | 47 | 39 | s | 50 | 43 | r |
| Burns | 13 | -1 | pc | 24 | 13 | sn |
| Enterprise | 24 | 7 | pc | 32 | 21 | c |
| Eugene | 37 | 24 | pc | 36 | 30 | i |
| Heppner | 24 | 12 | c | 28 | 19 | sn |
| Hermiston | 25 | 17 | c | 27 | 22 | sn |
| John Day | 30 | 10 | pc | 38 | 19 | sn |
| Klamath Falls | 23 | 15 | s | 37 | 25 | pc |
| La Grande | 25 | 13 | pc | 33 | 28 | sn |
| Meacham | 26 | 13 | pc | 32 | 29 | sn |
| Medford | 40 | 31 | pc | 47 | 36 | sn |
| Newport | 42 | 30 | s | 39 | 35 | r |
| North Bend | 49 | 37 | s | 50 | 41 | r |
| Ontario | 18 | 12 | pc | 27 | 18 | c |
| Pasco | 25 | 17 | c | 28 | 24 | sf |
| Pendleton | 25 | 15 | c | 26 | 21 | sn |
| Portland | 37 | 27 | s | 36 | 31 | i |
| Redmond | 25 | 13 | pc | 31 | 22 | sn |
| Salem | 38 | 24 | s | 37 | 29 | sn |
| Spokane | 17 | 8 | c | 24 | 20 | c |
| Ukiah | 26 | 6 | c | 23 | 18 | sn |
| Vancouver | 36 | 25 | s | 36 | 30 | pc |
| Walla Walla | 23 | 15 | c | 28 | 24 | sf |
| Yakima | 24 | 12 | c | 28 | 20 | sf |

WORLD CITIES

| | Today | | | Sun. | | |
|-------------|-------|----|----|------|----|----|
| | Hi | Lo | W | Hi | Lo | W |
| Beijing | 48 | 22 | s | 39 | 23 | s |
| Hong Kong | 68 | 65 | c | 69 | 66 | sh |
| Jerusalem | 44 | 39 | r | 47 | 42 | pc |
| London | 52 | 43 | sh | 51 | 43 | r |
| Mexico City | 72 | 46 | pc | 70 | 48 | pc |
| Moscow | 6 | 4 | pc | 9 | 2 | pc |
| Paris | 52 | 40 | sh | 48 | 43 | r |
| Rome | 57 | 46 | sh | 57 | 38 | sh |
| Seoul | 51 | 33 | pc | 46 | 29 | pc |
| Sydney | 77 | 67 | pc | 76 | 65 | sh |
| Tokyo | 56 | 45 | pc | 59 | 46 | pc |

WINDS

| (in mph) | Today | Sunday |
|-----------|---------|---------|
| Boardman | NE 4-8 | NNE 4-8 |
| Pendleton | NNE 3-6 | NNE 4-8 |

UV INDEX TODAY

0 1 1 1 0 0

8 a.m. 10 a.m. Noon 2 p.m. 4 p.m. 6 p.m.

0-2, Low 3-5, Moderate 6-7, High; 8-10, Very High; 11+, Extreme

The higher the AccuWeather.com UV Index™ number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection.

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NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 85° in Hollywood, Fla. Low -29° in Craig, Colo.

NATIONAL CITIES

| | Today | | | Sun. | | |
|----------------|-------|----|----|------|----|----|
| | Hi | Lo | W | Hi | Lo | W |
| Albuquerque | 39 | 21 | c | 44 | 25 | s |
| Atlanta | 51 | 35 | pc | 53 | 34 | pc |
| Atlantic City | 44 | 37 | s | 48 | 30 | s |
| Baltimore | 44 | 26 | s | 46 | 25 | s |
| Billings | 35 | 17 | s | 33 | 19 | s |
| Birmingham | 48 | 31 | pc | 53 | 31 | pc |
| Boise | 20 | 12 | pc | 31 | 21 | c |
| Boston | 39 | 29 | s | 41 | 21 | pc |
| Charleston, SC | 59 | 40 | pc | 61 | 40 | pc |
| Chicago, IL | 44 | 26 | pc | 42 | 24 | pc |
| Chicago, WV | 29 | 20 | s | 30 | 19 | pc |
| Cleveland | 31 | 26 | pc | 33 | 24 | pc |
| Dallas | 53 | 37 | c | 57 | 30 | c |
| Denver | 41 | 21 | s | 42 | 20 | pc |
| Detroit | 33 | 26 | pc | 32 | 19 | pc |
| El Paso | 50 | 32 | c | 54 | 27 | s |
| Fairbanks | 32 | 22 | pc | 25 | 16 | s |
| Fargo | 27 | 17 | s | 24 | 13 | s |
| Honolulu | 81 | 66 | s | 81 | 68 | s |
| Houston | 53 | 41 | c | 58 | 39 | c |
| Indianapolis | 33 | 22 | s | 29 | 22 | pc |
| Jacksonville | 62 | 46 | pc | 55 | 38 | r |
| Kansas City | 37 | 17 | s | 29 | 13 | s |
| Las Vegas | 51 | 37 | pc | 55 | 41 | c |
| Little Rock | 52 | 29 | pc | 54 | 27 | s |
| Los Angeles | 66 | 45 | pc | 64 | 48 | pc |
| Louisville | 43 | 27 | s | 40 | 26 | s |
| Memphis | 51 | 29 | s | 50 | 28 | s |
| Miami | 83 | 70 | pc | 80 | 63 | sh |
| Milwaukee | 30 | 21 | s | 29 | 18 | pc |
| Minneapolis | 29 | 19 | s | 26 | 16 | s |
| Nashville | 48 | 26 | s | 48 | 26 | s |
| New Orleans | 55 | 45 | c | 57 | 44 | c |
| New York City | 41 | 33 | s | 43 | 26 | s |
| Oklahoma City | 47 | 22 | s | 44 | 23 | c |
| Omaha | 34 | 12 | s | 25 | 10 | s |
| Philadelphia | 42 | 31 | s | 44 | 27 | s |
| Phoenix | 70 | 48 | s | 73 | 54 | s |
| Portland, ME | 36 | 24 | s | 36 | | |