

# EAST OREGONIAN

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## OUR VIEW

# Capitol construction

The Oregon State Capitol is getting a \$50 million upgrade, which will increase security at the Depression-era building but not protect it in the case of a severe earthquake.

It's a scaled-back version of a \$337 million overhaul of the building that lawmakers were unable to push forward in the last full legislative session. That version would have included seismic retrofitting to ensure the building would not crumble in all but the most powerful earthquake.

As Hillary Borrud reported from our Capital Bureau, Governor Kate Brown signed legislation Tuesday that will pay for \$30 million of the project by issuing bonds. Where the other \$20 million will come from is not yet known.

Part of the upgrades are necessary and overdue. The Oregon State Police office is tucked away in the building's basement — in case of emergency that's a bad place to have the good guys. Moving them up to the ground floor is necessary for the safety of legislators and the public, who are often walking the halls of the capitol.

The rest of the \$50 million will be used to build two additional wheelchair accessible entrances, replace leaky skylights, remodel and move some state offices and build vaults for electrical and mechanical equipment.

Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, said the capitol was a dangerous place for women,

especially after-hours, because it allowed for easy access through locked doors. He wouldn't elaborate, for security reasons.

But he did elaborate on why the upgrade would benefit Oregon schoolchildren.

Courtney said he was concerned about the safety of young Oregonians, especially the bus loads of children who visit the capitol.

"This building is in deplorable conditions," said Courtney at a March 3 press conference. "It's a safety threat. It's a health threat. And we're not stepping up."

Yet since 2007, after completing a seismic needs assessment, the state has known there are hundreds of Oregon schools — mostly on the west side of the state — that are in deplorable conditions when it comes to their ability to withstand a serious earthquake. These are places where our students spend many hours most days of the year, as opposed to a place where most will visit once or twice in their lives.

Clearly, upgrading hundreds of schools is a more expensive and more complex issue. The state has estimated the cost at more than \$500 million. But if Courtney believes it really is a safety threat and a health threat, legislators are not stepping up to discuss and solve that issue.

Perhaps it is just human nature. Schools are places legislators may visit just once or twice in their lives, instead of a place where they spend many hours many days of the year.

**Legislators will fix the capitol building for \$50 million, but \$500 million in school upgrades remain unfunded.**

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board of Publisher Kathryn Brown, Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, and Opinion Page Editor Tim Trainor. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

## YOUR VIEWS

### Fincicum shooting deserves thorough investigation

I had to stop taking my narcotic drugs (they're doctor prescribed following hip replacement surgery on March 14) to make sure I was reading what I was reading when I was reading Carlin Sacco's letter to the editor in the March 25 edition of the *East Oregonian*.

Ms. Sacco and I have locked horns on these pages before, but never to this extent. The last time she and I crossed swords I intimated that she was speaking authentic frontier gibberish. This time I'm not sure her letter rises to that level of comprehension.

It's too bad. If Ms. Sacco would take the aluminum foil off her head long enough so that it's no longer blocking her ears, she would become aware that there is really something troubling in the death of LaVoy Fincicum. While far from the peaceful protester painted by Ms. Sacco, Fincicum did not deserve to get gunned down by officers from the Oregon State Police.

I don't know whether the shooting was justified or not, but it deserves a thorough, objective investigation.

Fincicum was shot in the back. That raises a strong presumption in my mind that the policeman who fired the fatal shot did so improperly. What the right has been ignoring for a long time is that even "thugs" like Fincicum deserve the protection of the police. Bad behavior does not justify the police resorting to deadly physical force.

Too often in the past months and years, that is exactly what has happened in case after case.

Patrick J. Delaney  
Hermiston

### Milton-Freewater schools need local support

Last fall we were visiting our kids in Washington, D.C. They took us to a little restaurant that specialized in Middle Eastern food. We were surprised to see signs on the wall that this restaurant was a nonprofit devoting its profits to building schools in the Middle East.

We asked the waiter some questions about this and soon the owner was at our table. He told us how he went about helping people build schools.

"First an advocate of the community, usually in this country, contacts me," he said. "My first request is you must get commitments to fund one third of the cost. If they return with the commitments then I board a plane and travel to that community. I gather the leaders that want the school and tell them they must commit to one third of the cost. Then I leave for six months and when I return if they have the commitments then I commit the fund for the remainder and we start planning a school."

Here in Milton-Freewater the poverty rate, in the 2010 census was one of the highest in Oregon for city's with more than 5,000 residents. There are good reasons not to pass a bond; people struggle to make ends meet. Yet even people in an impoverished village in a third world country are expected to "have skin in the game" up to one third the cost. This is the way things are done now; there is no better deal down the road.

If people in a third world village can make a new school and a new hope, so can we. Vote yes on the school bond.

John D. Mitchell  
Milton-Freewater

## LETTERS POLICY

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published. Send letters to Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.

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## OTHER VIEWS

# College admissions shocker!

PALO ALTO, California — Cementing its standing as the most selective institution of higher education in the country, Stanford University announced this week that it had once again received a record-setting number of applications and that its acceptance rate — which had dropped to a previously uncharted low of 5 percent last year — plummeted all the way to its inevitable conclusion of 0 percent.

With no one admitted to the class of 2020, Stanford is assured that no other school can match its desirability in the near future.

"We had exceptional applicants, yes, but not a single student we couldn't live without," said a Stanford administrator who requested anonymity. "In the stack of applications that I reviewed, I didn't see any gold medalists from the last Olympics — Summer or Winter Games — and while there was a 17-year-old who'd performed surgery, it wasn't open-heart or a transplant or anything like that. She'll thrive at Yale."

News of Stanford's unprecedented selectiveness sent shock waves through the Ivy League, along with Amherst, Northwestern and at least a dozen other elite schools where, as a consequence, there could be substantial turnover among underperforming deans of admission.

Administrators at several of these institutions, mortified by acceptance rates still north of 6 percent, chided themselves for insufficient international outreach. Carnegie Mellon vowed that over the next five years, it would quadruple the number of applicants from Greenland. The University of Chicago announced plans to host a college fair in Ulan Bator.

Officials at the University of Pennsylvania, meanwhile, realized that sweatshirts, T-shirts and glossy print and web catalogs weren't doing nearly enough to advertise its charms, and that the university wasn't fully leveraging the mystique of its world-renowned business school. So early next fall, every high school senior in America who scored in the top 4 percent nationally on the SAT will receive, in the mail, a complimentary spray bottle of Wharton: The Fragrance, which has a top note of sandalwood and a bottom note of crisp, freshly minted \$100 bills.

Seniors who scored in the top 2 percent will get the scented shower gel and reed diffuser set as well.

On campuses from coast to coast, there was soul searching about ways in which colleges might be unintentionally deterring prospective applicants.

Were the applications themselves too laborious? Brown may give next year's aspirants the option of submitting, in lieu of



FRANK BRUNI  
Comment

several essays, one haiku and one original recipe using organic kale.

"Compositions of 750 or even 500 words give some students syllable fatigue," said a school official, "while others exhibit their greatest creativity around roughage. We want to meet them on their turf, especially if it's leafy and a rich source of vitamin B6."

Current high school seniors who had set their sights on Stanford responded to its announcement with astonishment and fury.

"This is the worst thing that has happened to anyone, ever," said Alissa Parker, 18, a

senior at Sidwell Friends in Washington, D.C. She added that whether she accepts an offer of admission from MIT or one from Duke, she'll defer enrollment and take a gap year to regain her confidence.

Taylor Abramovich, a 15-year-old senior at the Horace Mann School in New York City, blamed his parents for his dashed Stanford dream. When he was a toddler, they hired the

lawyer David Boies and successfully sued Horace Mann to let Taylor begin kindergarten far ahead of schedule.

"If I'd been held back a year, I would have been applying to the Stanford class of 2021, when the school might start accepting students again," Taylor fumed. He said that his one consolation for not getting in was knowing that none of his peers did, either.

At first blush, Stanford's decision would seem to jeopardize its fundraising. The thousands of rejected applicants included hundreds of children of alumni who'd donated lavishly over the years, their expectations obvious in the fact that they affixed their \$50,000 checks to photographs of Emma playing an obscure woodwind in an Umbrian chamber orchestra or Scott donning the traditional dress of an indigenous people for whom he tailored a special social-media network while on spring break.

But over recent years, Stanford administrators noticed that as the school rejected more and more comers, it received bigger and bigger donations, its endowment rising in tandem with its exclusivity, its luster a magnet for Silicon Valley lucre.

In fact just 12 hours after the university's rejection of all comers, an alumnus stepped forward with a financial gift prodigious enough for Stanford to begin construction on its long-planned Center for Social Justice, a first-ever collaboration of Renzo Piano and Santiago Calatrava, who also designed the pedestrian bridge that will connect it to the student napping meadows.

Frank Bruni, an Op-Ed columnist for *The New York Times* since June 2011, joined the newspaper in 1995.

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# Be heard!

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