

BROWN: Prohibits use of state resources on any registry targeting religion

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Deputy Attorney General Fred Boss said the state justice department has not yet filed any lawsuits related to the president's executive order.

"We are carefully reviewing legal cases around the country and assessing how we can best advance our effort," Boss said.

The Attorney General's Office plans to announce the next steps in the legal process next week, he said. Brown sent a two-page letter to the office asking that a lawsuit challenge the president's order.

The governor's executive order expands a 1987 law that prohibits the use of state and local law enforcement resources in federal immigration enforcement.

"Oregon's unique law has succeeded in keeping the deportation of immigrants by the federal government separate and distinct from the enforcement of our state criminal laws by our local police," said Kimberly McCullough, ACLU of Oregon's legislative director. "We are pleased the governor has extended this important state disentanglement to all state agencies and employees."

It's unclear how many people headed to Oregon were affected by Trump's executive order, according to the ACLU of Oregon, which has provided legal support to airport detainees.

A 5-month-old Iranian girl who was scheduled to have surgery at Oregon Health & Science University for a heart condition was one of those not allowed to enter the country because of the president's executive order, according to a report by KATU News.

"I find it deplorable that an infant who was supposed to come to Oregon to receive much needed live-saving care was not able to access that care at Oregon Health & Science University," Brown said Thursday.

The governor's executive order does the following:

- Bars state employees from discriminating against residents for their immigration status.
- Prohibits the use of state moneys, equipment or personnel for detecting or apprehending people solely on the basis of their immigration status.
- Prohibits the use of state resources to assist or facilitate the creation of a Muslim registry, or any other registry targeting a religious group.

DISPATCH: Average salary for a dispatcher is \$78,118

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calls — about 9,150 calls per dispatcher.

At a meeting Tuesday in Pendleton with representatives from several partner agencies, Rowan and his staff pitched a plan to increase the number of dispatchers to 18.

"At the end of the day, the desire is not to pad the sheriff's office in any way, but to improve the service we rely on," Rowan told the group.

An 18th dispatcher, Lieuallen said, would relieve a litany of problems for the center and its employees. That includes making sick time easier to cover and letting someone take a break, particularly during peak call hours on weekends. Lieuallen said overtime for the first half of the fiscal year cost the center \$64,000, and the average annual salary and benefits for a county dispatcher is \$78,118.

The sheriff's office last year had cities and agencies increase their payments to the dispatch center, a move that fell hard on small towns such as Pilot Rock and Stanfield. The latest ask would mean Pendleton would pay about \$330,260 next fiscal year, almost \$22,000 more than what it pays now. Hermiston would jump up about \$21,500 to \$324,978.

Umatilla would pay an additional \$4,500 more, Stanfield about \$2,400 more, and Pilot Rock about \$1,400. Blair Larsen, Stanfield city manager, said no one was under the illusion the cost of dispatch would stay the same, but "to have an

increase already is kind of disheartening."

Darla Huxel, Umatilla police chief, said all local emergency agencies could use more staff, but there is another issue with sending more money to the dispatch center.

"There are some agencies not satisfied with the level of service they are receiving," she said. "So this is a hard pill to swallow."

Huxel and a few others said they have yet to have a say in how dispatch operates. The complaint fired up undersheriff Jim Littlefield, who stated the sheriff's office implemented a program for dispatch administrators to deal with systemic problems, but so far only Pendleton police and Umatilla County Fire District 1 have opted in. The invitation, he said, stands.

Some members also asked for an assurance that if they pay more in the upcoming fiscal year, they would not have another increase for a few years. Rowan said he could not make that promise.

Hiring another dispatcher would require approval from the county board of commissioners, which told department heads in the fall there would be no money for more staff due to the increase in cost of the Public Employees Retirement System and insurance. Rowan said that's not stopping him from pushing for a new dispatcher.

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Weakened corruption law ignites anger and protests in Romania

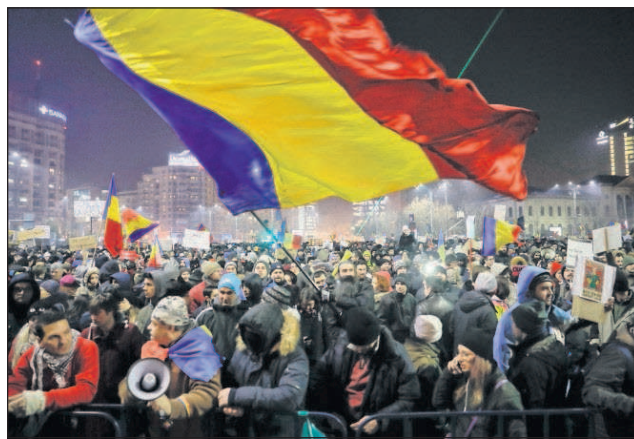
BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — Romania's new decree diluting the country's corruption law ignited a furor Thursday, prompting strong criticism from home and abroad and a declaration from the president that he would ask judges to declare it unconstitutional.

Tens of thousands protested for the third night in Bucharest, the capital, and thousands more in some 20 other Romanian cities, calling for the government to resign after issuing the watered-down emergency decree a day earlier.

But Prime Minister Sorin Grindeanu said the government would not repeal the decree, deepening the political crisis.

President Klaus Iohannis announced he will take the decree to the Constitutional Court, the last legal resort to stop the law by the ruling center-left Social Democrats, whose leader, Liviu Dragnea, is among those with a corruption conviction.

Protester Florin Varlan, 42, said Thursday evening



AP Photo/Vadim Ghirda
A man waves a large Romanian flag during a protest joined by tens of thousands against a government decree that dilutes what qualifies as corruption, in Bucharest, Romania, Thursday.

that he would continue to protest, after Dragnea "came out today and showed he understood nothing."

The ordinance decriminalizes official misconduct if the funds involved are less than 200,000 lei (\$47,800). Critics say the measure helps government allies and other officials facing corruption charges get out of prison or clear their records and claim it will encourage more

officials to steal on the job.

Dragnea defended the decree, which did not go through parliament, saying it would not "free corrupt people." Dragnea also called Iohannis "the moral authority" of the sporadic violence that broke out late Wednesday between police and protesters.

Dragnea, who has a two-year suspended prison sentence for vote rigging,

says he wants a retrial. The conviction bars him from serving as prime minister, which he says is unfair.

In a statement, the U.S., Germany, Canada, Finland, the Netherlands and France said Romania's government had undermined "progress on rule of law and the fight against corruption over the past ten years."

European Commission vice president Frank Timmermans urged the Romanian government on Thursday to "urgently reconsider" the decree, warning that if it is adopted, it could affect the EU funds that Romania gets.

U.S. State Department spokesman Mark Toner said Romania's international credibility and attractiveness for foreign investment were at stake.

"The United States is deeply concerned about the Government of Romania's recent measures that undermine rule of law and weaken accountability for financial and corruption-related crimes," Toner said.

SCHOOL: Four out of the seven board members juggle full-time jobs along with school board duties

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a school board member and what challenges they could face.

Debbie McBee, the chair of the Pendleton school board and eight-year member, is featured prominently in some of campaign's material.

"One of the things I love about being on the school board is using policy and being able to influence people — whether it's teachers, parents or the children themselves," she says in a testimonial.

In an interview, McBee said her position on the board has helped make a difference in the Pendleton School District, but others might be more squeamish about some of the other aspects of being an elected official.

McBee said being a Pendleton School Board member requires an average of 10 hours in time commitment each month, which includes bimonthly meetings, committee assignments and visits to school sites.

Four out of the seven school board members juggle full-time jobs along with school board duties, McBee said, while the rest either do not work or work part-time.

McBee said some are turned off to the idea because it would force them into the spotlight where their stances would be scrutinized by the public.

McBee referenced the school board's upcoming decision on how to make up instructional hours lost to snow as a stance that draws attention and, inevitability,

disagreement.

Other recent issues that have garnered public interest include the district redrawing elementary school boundaries and changing the school calendar to move the first day of school ahead of Round-Up.

The Pendleton School Board hasn't had a contested race since 2005, but McBee is hopeful that recent trends will change.

"No one has a right to be on the school board, it's an earned privilege that comes from the citizens," she said.

McBee pointed to a recent vacancy on the board that could indicate a new wave of people interested in governing the school system. When former board member Bob Rosselle resigned because he couldn't continue to make the time commitment, 10 people applied to fill the rest of his term.

The board ultimately appointed Gary George, the board's only American Indian member in a school district that serves the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Recruiting board members of color is one of the emphases of the "Get on Board" campaign.

"Our demographics are changing and Oregon's school boards haven't," Pulaski said.

Karen Sherman, chair of Hermiston School District's seven-member board, said she doesn't remember a contested race since she ran in 2001. The district is the largest in Eastern Oregon with more than 5,600

students.

However, Sherman said in times where a position has to be filled mid-term due to a resignation, the board has often had multiple people interested — possibly, she said, because of the shorter service time and not having to compete in an election.

Sherman said she thinks two things contribute to the low turnout for board elections: time commitment, and contentment with the board's operations.

"I think part of it is that everybody's busy, and people have to prioritize where to spend their time," she said. "And for the most part, people are happy with the way the district works. It's not a lack of interest, but people are in a position where they're confident with what's happening in the school district."

Sherman said as chair, she probably spends about 7 hours a week on board business outside of meetings, but other candidates probably average about two or three.

Delbert Gehrke, chair of the Echo School Board, also couldn't remember the last contested race — and that it sometimes takes some "arm-twisting" to get people to volunteer to assume positions that are vacated mid-term.

"It takes time," Gehrke said. "We have a lot of good people, but not a lot of people wanting to serve."

Both Gehrke and Sherman said the majority of their board members have full-time jobs, while a few are retired.

Sherman — a retired educator herself — said that while not many people run for school board, the return rate is pretty high. Once people are on the board, they tend to stay on for several years.

Gehrke said he doesn't think there will be a big rush of people running for the board any time soon.

"I think it's healthy if there's interest in the community, so I'd like to see more people," he said. "But I don't know if it's realistic in this small town."

Sherman said she would like to see more board candidates — especially those who represent the Hispanic populations in the district.

School boards aren't the only Umatilla County governing bodies that have struggled to attract candidates.

During the May 2015 election, only eight out of the 136 seats up for grabs on local boards and commissions were contested and 27 were decided by write-in because there were no declared candidates.

The filing period for school board seats opens Saturday and runs through March 16. Three Pendleton School Board seats are up for election in 2017, which are currently held by George, McBee, and Steve Umberger.

School board elections across the state will be held May 16.

Reporters Jayati Ramakrishnan and Antonio Sierra contributed to this story.



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