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## Policy prohibits state employees from carrying weapons at work

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN and PHIL WRIGHT  
*East Oregonian*

Jan. 6 marked the last day most state employees could bring personal guns and weapons to work.

The Oregon Department of Administrative Services that day unveiled its new policy on "weapons in the workplace." Gun rights advocates consider the policy unconstitutional and a danger to state worker safety. Supporters of the ban view it as a reasonable safety measure. The state says it brings clarity to murky waters.

Policy No. 50-010-05 "prohibits weapons in the workplace unless an employee is permitted to carry, handle, operate or transport a weapon as part of the employee's assigned duties in the course and scope of the employee's employment. A permit to carry a concealed handgun does not give an employee the authority to use or carry a handgun into the workplace."

### Firing back

Kevin Starrett is the director of the gun-rights nonprofit the Oregon Firearms Federation and alerted state lawmakers about the policy. He said it infringes on the constitutional rights of state workers to carry guns like other Oregonians and in effect relegates state workers to second-class citizens.

"Clearly, the infringements are pretty severe," he said. "Now those people are being told they're sitting ducks. This is not crazy speculation on my part, this has happened."

Starrett referred to the December 2015 San Bernardino attack, in which

See GUNS/14A

# HAVE GUN, CAN'T TRAVEL

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN and PHIL WRIGHT ♦ *East Oregonian*

## Transportation fund giveaway without 'rhyme or reason'

By JADE MCDOWELL  
*East Oregonian*

Cities that saw their special transportation funds decrease again this year are questioning the fairness of how that money is allocated.

Oregon's special transportation fund gives cigarette tax money to counties, transportation districts and tribes to provide transportation for senior and disabled residents.

In Umatilla County, that money is then distributed to cities and nonprofits by recommendation of the Special Transportation Advisory Committee.

Hermiston assistant city manager Mark Morgan said during the committee's Feb. 6 meeting, where the committee considered applications for \$397,000 in funds for the 2017-2019 biennium, the money was not divided based on a formula that takes into consideration factors such as budget or services offered. Instead, the committee gave each applicant the same percentage of their request.

Morgan said it felt like the county's approach to STF funds is to "throw a sack of money on the table" and tell the committee to give it to whoever it wants.

"There's no rhyme or reason," he said.

Linda Carter, finance director for the city of Pendleton, expressed the same frustration with making cuts based on what an agency requested instead of the level of service it provides.

"Those who shot for the moon got the moon, and those of us who asked for our normal request got less," she said.

Carter said she believes

See FUNDS/12A

## Rep. Walden meets with locals for first time since election

Town halls held in Weston, Boardman

By GEORGE PAVEN  
*East Oregonian*

For the first time since President Donald J. Trump was elected in November, Oregon's lone Republican congressman, Greg Walden, returned Friday to meet face-to-face with constituents in Umatilla and Morrow counties.

Walden fielded questions about health care, immigration, the environment, education and Trump's campaign promise to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border during a pair of town halls in Weston and Boardman. A third meeting was also held later in Arlington.

About 110 people filled Weston Memorial Hall for Walden's first stop, and another 75 for his second appearance at the SAGE Center in Boardman. On Monday, Walden held a teleconference from Washington, D.C. where he discussed many of the same issues with about 4,000 people who listened in on the call.

Despite the recent controversy surrounding Trump, Walden said he had no jitters about Friday's



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden talks about the work he has done in Congress at a town hall meeting Friday at the SAGE Center in Boardman.



**More online**  
For video from the town hall visit  
[eastoregonian.com](http://eastoregonian.com)

**"My view is that a country that doesn't have control of its borders doesn't have control of its security."**

— Greg Walden, Republican congressman

meetings in person. People clearly have differing opinions, he said, though everyone remained civil and respectful.

"This was Oregonians at their best," Walden said shortly after his first town hall in Weston.

Both meetings kicked off with questions about how Walden and fellow Republicans plan to repeal

and replace the Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare, as they have frequently promised. Speaking to the crowd in Boardman, Walden said there are now 1,022 counties nationwide with only one insurance provider available to them on the exchange. It is the GOP's mission, he said, to give

Americans more choices and drive down costs.

However, Walden said Congress will take its time to make sure they get it right.

"That's why we haven't repealed, and why we haven't replaced," he said.

See WALDEN/12A



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