

SMOKING: Hawaii, California have also raised the age to 21

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alcohol is less addictive than tobacco.

Recent research, including some from the U.S. Surgeon General’s Office, shows that brains under age 26 are more susceptible to addiction.

The legislation would impose first-time civil penalties of \$50 for clerks and \$500 for managers who sell to minors.

“We made a conscious decision not have criminal penalties because we know that tobacco companies tend to target low-income communities who can least afford it,” Steiner Hayward

said.

Taking 18- to 20-year-olds out of the legal market would result in an estimated loss in tobacco tax revenue of \$1.6 million every two years, according to a projection by the Legislative Revenue Office.

An increase in the tobacco tax proposed by Gov. Kate Brown could offset some that loss.

In 2015, Hawaii became the first state in the nation to raise the smoking age to 21. California followed suit last year. An additional 210 cities and counties, including New York City and Boston, have similar laws.



AP Photo/Alex Brandon

House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wis., departs after speaking to the media after a Republican caucus meeting on Capitol Hill, Thursday in Washington.

HEALTH: ‘It’s done tomorrow. Or Obamacare stays’

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“For seven and a half years we have been promising the American people that we will repeal and replace this broken law because it’s collapsing and it’s failing families, and tomorrow we’re proceeding,” House Speaker Paul Ryan said, then walked off without answering as reporters demanded to know whether the bill had the votes to pass.

The outcome of Friday’s vote was impossible to predict. Both conservative and moderate lawmakers had claimed the bill lacked votes after a long day of talks. But the White House appeared ready to gamble that the prospect of failing to repeal former President Barack Obama’s health law, after seven years of promising to do exactly that, would force lawmakers into the “yes” column.

“It’s done tomorrow. Or ‘Obamacare’ stays,” said Rep. Chris Collins, R-N.Y., a top Trump ally in the House.

Collins was among those predicting success on Friday, but others didn’t hide their anxiety about the outcome.

Asked whether Republicans would be unified on Friday’s vote, freshman Rep Matt Gaetz of Florida said, “I sure hope so, or we’ll have the opportunity to watch a unified Democratic caucus impeach Donald Trump in two years when we lose the majority.”

Thursday’s maneuvers added up to high drama on Capitol Hill, but Friday promised even more suspense with the prospect of leadership putting a major bill on the floor uncertain about whether it would pass or fail.

The Republican legislation would halt Obama’s tax penalties against people who don’t buy coverage and cut the federal-state Medicaid program for low earners, which the Obama statute had expanded. It would provide tax credits to help people pay medical bills, though generally skimpier than Obama’s statute provides. It also would allow insurers to charge older Americans more and repeal tax boosts the law imposed on high-income people and health industry companies.

The measure would also block federal payments to Planned Parenthood for a year, another stumbling block for GOP moderates.

In a concession to the conservative House Freedom Caucus, many of whose members have withheld support, the legislation would repeal requirements for insurers to cover “essential health benefits” such as maternity care and substance abuse treatment.

The drama unfolded seven years to the day after Obama signed his landmark law, an anniversary GOP leaders

meant to celebrate with a vote to undo the divisive legislation. “Obamacare” gave birth to the tea party movement and helped Republicans win and keep control of Congress and then take the White House.

Instead, as GOP leaders were forced to delay the vote Thursday, C-SPAN filled up the time playing footage of Obama signing the Affordable Care Act.

“In the final analysis, this bill falls short,” GOP Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler of Washington state said in a statement Thursday as she became the latest rank-and-file Republican, normally loyal to leadership, to declare her opposition. “The difficulties this bill would create for millions of children were left unaddressed,” she said, citing the unraveling of Medicaid.

In a danger sign for Republicans, a Quinnipiac University poll found that people disapprove of the GOP legislation by 56 percent to 17 percent, with 26 percent undecided. Trump’s handling of health care was viewed unfavorably by 6 in 10.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., who as speaker was Obama’s crucial lieutenant in passing the Democratic bill in the first place, couldn’t resist a dig at the GOP disarray.

“You may be a great negotiator,” she said of Trump. “Rookie’s error for bringing this up on a day when clearly you’re not ready.”

Obama declared in a statement that “America is stronger” because of the current law and said Democrats must make sure “any changes will make our health care system better, not worse for hardworking Americans.” Trump tweeted to supporters, “Go with our plan! Call your Rep & let them know.”

Unlike Obama and Pelosi when they passed Obamacare, the Republicans had failed to build an outside constituency or coalition to support their bill. Instead, medical professionals, doctors and hospitals — major employers in some districts — as well as the AARP and other influential consumer groups were nearly unanimously opposed. So were outside conservative groups who argued the bill didn’t go far enough. The Chamber of Commerce was in favor.

Moderates were given pause by projections of 24 million Americans losing coverage in a decade and higher out-of-pocket costs for many low-income and older people, as predicted by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. In an updated analysis Thursday, the CBO said late changes to the bill meant to win over reluctant lawmakers would cut beneficial deficit reduction in half, while failing to cover more people.

WHEAT: Fungus can cut into yields by 40-80 percent if left untreated

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is Harri’s job to be the eyes on the ground and figure out what kind of fertilizer and chemicals are needed for clients to maximize their yield.

High yields are especially important this year, given the global downturn in wheat prices. The crop is currently fetching less than \$5 per bushel in Portland.

Diseases like stripe rust and snow mold can easily thwart yields if they are not managed properly, along with invasive weeds that rob moisture and nutrients from the field. That is why springtime is so crucial for growers, Harri said.

“The healthier we can keep these plants earlier in the season, and the cleaner we can keep the field from invasive weeds robbing moisture and nutrients, the better,” Harri said.

Unlike the past few years, drought will not be an issue. Harri said Adams recently experienced its second-wettest February on record, and has received a whopping 15

inches of precipitation since August. Normally, the area clocks in at 16.5 inches for the entire water year.

All that moisture is a blessing for dryland farms, Harri said, but isn’t without its own set of challenges. Stripe rust, for example, thrives in cool, soggy environments, and the fungus can cut into wheat yields by 40-80 percent if left untreated.

Harri said he is expecting heavy rust pressure this year, as well as snow mold, another fungal disease that can flatten wheat stands with sickly patches that resemble spider webs.

“It just feeds on that plant tissue,” he said.

As the name suggests, snow mold develops under extensive snow cover that prevents the plant from getting enough air and sunlight. Harri said he expects farmers will start applying fungicide to treat the problem within a week or two.

For farmers like Don and Tom Lieuallen, they depend on people like Harri

to help identify issues early and come up with a quick management plan. By the time they see stripe rust in the field, it is already too late.

“We’re talking a potential train wreck,” said Don Lieuallen, who runs the farm on Duff Road with Tom, his son.

That being said, Lieuallen added he would rather deal with too much moisture than not enough.

Don Wysocki, an extension soil scientist for Oregon State University in Pendleton, said wheat stands were already well established going into fall and most are still looking good.

“The water year is well above what we’ve been seeing,” Wysocki said. “That, to me, is an optimistic outlook.”

Tim Watts, regional commercial manager for Monsanto WestBred, said he has also been busy with wheat stand assessments across the Columbia Basin. His clients range from Pendleton and La Grande to Wasco and Madras.

The snow cover isn’t all bad, Watts said. Snow can act as an insulator against the cold air and shield from debris in high winds. But like Harri, he advises growers to keep a close watch for diseases early this season.

“Anytime we have a heavy winter, those disease issues tend to be a little more prevalent,” Watts said.

In addition, Harri said the plethora of moisture has also flushed many nutrients deeper into the soil — in some cases as much as 4 feet down, where the roots of young wheat plants cannot reach.

Harri recommended the Lieuallens spread additional fertilizer over the topsoil to make up for that deficiency. It may still take a while before things are dry enough to start bringing heavy machinery on to the fields.

“Most growers are just anxious to get done what they need to get done,” he said.

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STATUES: Will be displayed at Pendleton art show April 18-20

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son-Terjeson said she got the idea for an art class after substituting at Hawthorne last year, when she noticed that many of the students were sitting in front of computers most of the day as they worked on credit retrieval programs.

As the artist in residence, Peterson-Terjeson said she dabbles in all sorts of mediums, but she wanted something different and unique to engage the students.

The statue project gave Peterson-Terjeson the opportunity to teach students problem solving skills and history (she had them study Michelangelo sculptures to find inspiration) without requiring a kiln or the other equipment usually associated with bronze work.

The Hawthorne students demonstrated how they were able to make bronze-like statues without the high heat.

The students each received a wire hanger that they reconfigured into a stick figure. They then wrapped the figure in layers of foil and masking tape before applying a layer of cotton cloth dipped in Dutch fabric hardener.

The process resembles papier-mâché, but Peterson-Terjeson said the cloth is hard enough that the statues have the fortitude to weather the elements in an outdoor display. Spray painting the newly hardened statues is the last step to making a bronze without any bronze.

There was a consensus among the students that the 45-minute art class was a highlight for them that saved them from having to work on credit retrieval for most of the day. Hawthorne specializes in educating credit deficient students and uses digital programs to help make up the credits they missed in earlier classes.

Peterson-Terjeson shared some of the thank you notes students wrote to her about the class, which will end on Friday.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Treyal Groesbeck holds up the faux bronze sculpture he created Thursday at the Hawthorne Alternative High School in Pendleton. The class is part of an art-in-residency program.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Travis Underwood works to create a faux bronze sculpture Thursday at the Hawthorne Alternative High School in Pendleton. The class is part of an art-in-residency program.



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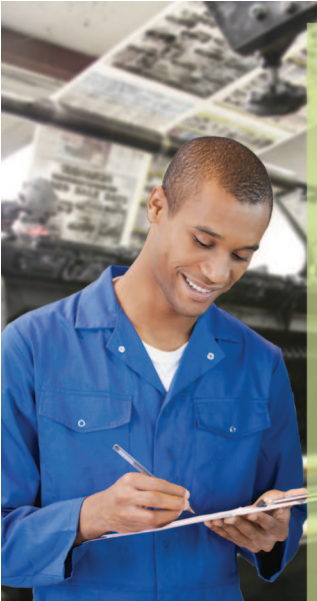
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