

# Oregon's first immigrant Latina lawmaker makes an impact

By **ANDREW SELSKY**  
Associated Press

WOODBURN — Teresa Alonso Leon envisioned a better life in a promised land when she was brought from Mexico to America as a young girl. Instead, her family wound up in an unheated house in Oregon with no indoor plumbing, eking out a living by picking strawberries.

It is all the more remarkable, then, that Alonso is now one of the first people brought to the U.S. illegally to become a lawmaker in America.

"I think it shows that human potential does not know immigration status, and that among America's immigrants, especially those who have come here as children and benefited from the right to education, their potential offers leadership for the country," said Arturo Vargas, executive director of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials.

The irony that Alonso was elected on the same day Donald Trump beat Hillary Clinton in the presidential race is not lost on her.

"We didn't get our woman president that we were hoping for, but they got me as a legislator," Alonso said with a laugh in her small office in the Oregon Capitol.

Alonso, a Democrat, became a U.S. citizen in 2012. Now, with Trump stepping up immigration enforcement, she sees herself as a defender of her constituents. Her district is centered around the predominantly Latino town of Woodburn, 30 miles south of Portland.

U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement, known by its acronym as ICE, already has focused on the town, stopping two vans loaded with workers in February and taking several people away. Alonso is a former Woodburn City Council member.

"When I think about the folks in my community who



In this May 18 photo, Oregon Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon, left, speaks with her legislative aide, Audrey Mechling, in Alonso's office in the Oregon State Capitol in Salem. Alonso is Oregon Legislature's first Latina immigrant lawmaker.



In this May 12 photo, a student walks through the front lobby of Woodburn High School. Teresa Alonso Leon has been making an impact as the first Latina immigrant member of the Oregon Legislature. "Our Latino students see her as inspirational," said Victor Vergara, principal of the high school's Academy of International Studies.

wake up so early to go to work, and now they wake up in the morning to go to work and hope and pray that they don't get pulled over by ICE, to me that's just unacceptable," Alonso said in an interview. Some kids are even afraid to attend school, she said, worried they'll return to empty homes, their parents gone.

On a recent afternoon, students streamed out of Woodburn High School, many chatting in Spanish

as they headed for their yellow buses. Four out of five students at the school, which Alonso once attended, are Latino.

"Our Latino students see her as inspirational," said Victor Vergara, principal of the high school's Academy of International Studies. "They see her and think 'We can do that. She looks just like us.'"

Since becoming the first immigrant Latina lawmaker in Oregon's Legislature,

Alonso has joined three other lawmakers in filing a public records request with ICE to obtain details of enforcement actions, to determine how they have changed.

Among her bills is one that would require Oregon's public universities and community colleges to promote inclusiveness and diversity. Another would prohibit state agencies from contracting with companies that don't prevent sexual harassment and discrimination. The Oregon Trial Lawyers Association said in support of the measure that many workers face on-the-job discrimination, and that the state shouldn't spend taxpayer money with companies that refuse to have policies barring harassment.

Some of Alonso's fellow lawmakers, however, are unhappy about illegal immigration. Republican Rep. Sal Esquivel introduced a bill that sought to repeal a 1987 law that made Oregon America's first sanctuary state. The bill died in committee.

"States need to comply with federal immigration laws," Esquivel said in an email.



Contributed photo/Wheeler County Sheriff's Office

A wreck near Fossil killed two motorcyclists Saturday evening, and injured others.

## Memorial Weekend crash kills two motorcyclists, injures several others

By **ANGEL CARPENTER**  
EO Media Group

A Memorial Day weekend crash killed two motorcyclists and seriously injured several other riders late Saturday night on Highway 19 near Fossil.

The crash occurred when a vehicle traveling north crossed into the oncoming lane of traffic, striking a large number of motorcycle riders who were traveling the opposite direction.

Motorcyclists Aaron Michael Polsfuss and Donald Robert Pratt were killed. Multiple others were injured.

The driver of the vehicle, Lisa Ann Niehaus, was arrested and booked in jail on multiple charges, including two counts of criminally negligent homicide, three counts of assault in the third degree and several misdemeanors.

Wheeler County Sheriff Chris Humphreys, who said he was on the scene from the start, called it "horrific."

"It is definitely the worst in Wheeler County history," he said.

Several agencies responded to the crash at 10:40 p.m. Saturday near milepost 60, including ambulances from Spray, Fossil, Condon and Arlington. Four helicopters

and a fixed-wing plane transported patients from the scene and from Asher Community Health Clinic in Fossil.

Volunteer medical crews and fire departments responded, along with Wheeler County Sheriff's office and Oregon State Police.

Highway 19 was closed for nearly nine hours as a local crane operator assisted in clearing the wreckage.

"I've seen some things in the 20 years that I've been doing this," Humphreys said. "It's heartbreaking on every side here. I'm in contact with the families, and it's heartbreaking for them."

The motorcycle group, which are self-identified as members of the Gypsy Jokers Motorcycle Club, were headed to the 40th Fossil Motorcycle Campout at Bear Hollow Park south of Fossil. Humphreys said they believe more than 40 motorcyclists were riding together. He added that getting a full count was difficult.

In addition to the two charges of criminally negligent homicide, Class B felonies, Niehaus was charged with three counts of assault in the third degree, Class C felonies, for unlawfully and recklessly causing serious physical injury.

## Corrections

The Pendleton High School class of 1967 reunion hors d'oeuvres on Tuesday, June 6 at Wildhorse Resort is open only to classmates. And contact Greg Smith at 541-379-0362 if you have questions about the co-ed golf scramble on June 5. The *East Oregonian* works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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### AccuWeather.com Forecast

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Cooler with clouds and sun	Variable cloudiness	Partly sunny and pleasant	Sunny to partly cloudy and nice	Cooler with some sun
PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
70°	54°	72°	52°	74°
54°	72°	52°	74°	45°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
75°	57°	79°	56°	80°
57°	79°	56°	80°	46°
79°	56°	80°	46°	84°
56°	80°	46°	84°	53°
84°	53°	73°	51°	73°
51°	73°	51°	73°	51°

### ALMANAC

#### PENDLETON

through 3 p.m. yesterday

#### TEMPERATURE

HIGH	LOW
87°	56°
Yesterday	74°
Normals	74°
Records	102° (1931) 36° (1978)

#### PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.93"
Normal month to date	1.34"
Year to date	9.14"
Last year to date	5.54"
Normal year to date	6.45"

#### HERMISTON

through 3 p.m. yesterday

#### TEMPERATURE

HIGH	LOW
93°	58°
Yesterday	76°
Normals	76°
Records	102° (1983) 34° (1979)

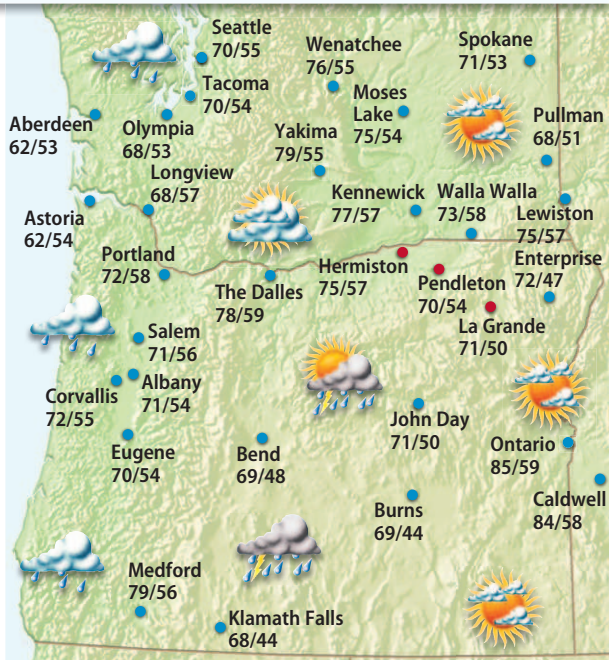
#### PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.43"
Normal month to date	1.09"
Year to date	6.31"
Last year to date	4.23"
Normal year to date	5.08"

#### SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	5:10 a.m.
Sunset tonight	8:36 p.m.
Moonrise today	11:46 a.m.
Moonset today	1:04 a.m.

First	Full	Last	New
June 1	June 9	June 17	June 23



### REGIONAL FORECAST

**Coastal Oregon:** Mostly cloudy today. A little rain; arriving in the afternoon across the north.

**Eastern and Central Oregon:** Intervals of clouds and sun today; a shower or thunderstorm in spots in central parts.

**Western Washington:** Mainly cloudy today; a little afternoon rain at the coast. A couple of showers tonight.

**Eastern Washington:** Clouds and sun today. A shower or thunderstorm around in the mountains tonight.

**Cascades:** Mostly cloudy, a thunderstorm in spots this afternoon.

**Northern California:** A shower today, but a thunderstorm in spots in the interior mountains.

### REGIONAL CITIES

	Today			Thu.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Astoria	62	54	r	62	52	c
Baker City	73	48	pc	66	41	pc
Bend	69	48	c	68	42	pc
Brookings	59	51	c	58	48	pc
Burns	69	44	pc	70	39	pc
Enterprise	72	47	pc	62	42	pc
Eugene	70	54	c	68	49	pc
Heppner	70	51	pc	70	47	c
Hermiston	75	57	pc	79	56	c
John Day	71	50	pc	68	46	c
Klamath Falls	68	44	c	72	38	pc
La Grande	71	50	pc	67	47	pc
Meacham	68	47	pc	65	44	pc
Medford	79	56	c	81	50	pc
Newport	59	53	c	59	51	c
North Bend	64	55	c	62	52	c
Ontario	85	59	pc	77	53	c
Pasco	76	55	pc	80	53	c
Pendleton	70	54	pc	72	52	c
Portland	72	58	c	70	54	c
Redmond	73	47	c	72	39	pc
Salem	71	56	c	69	51	c
Spokane	71	53	pc	69	51	pc
Ukiah	67	46	pc	65	44	c
Vancouver	70	57	pc	67	53	c
Walla Walla	73	58	pc	75	56	c
Yakima	79	55	c	78	50	pc

### WORLD CITIES

	Today			Thu.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Beijing	93	61	pc	87	59	c
Hong Kong	87	81	sh	89	80	r
Jerusalem	82	57	s	75	58	s
London	70	53	pc	75	54	pc
Mexico City	72	58	t	73	57	t
Moscow	65	52	sh	60	42	r
Paris	76	59	pc	81	62	pc
Rome	78	58	s	79	59	s
Seoul	80	64	pc	79	57	pc
Sydney	61	50	sh	63	51	s
Tokyo	80	67	pc	76	68	r

### WINDS

(in mph)	Today	Thursday
Boardman	WSW 8-16	WSW 8-16
Pendleton	W 6-12	W 7-14

### UV INDEX TODAY

1 4 6 5 3 1

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

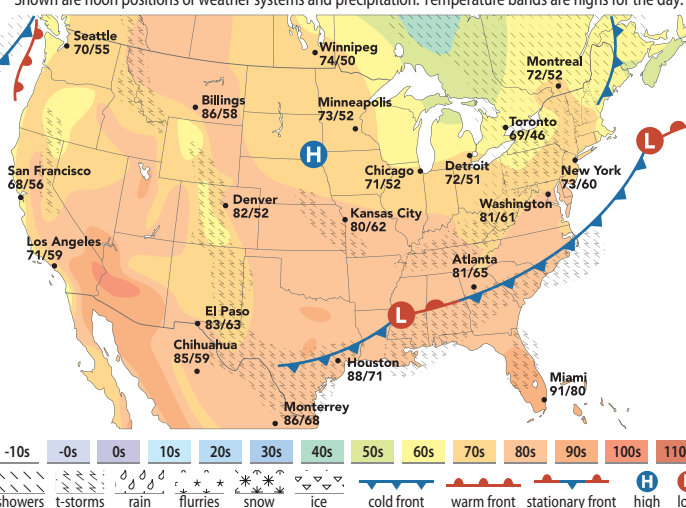
0-2, Low 3-5, Moderate 6-7, High; 8-10, Very High; 11+, Extreme

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.



**National Summary:** Showers and thunderstorms will affect a large part of the Eastern and Southern states today. Some of the storms can be briefly severe. Storms will dot the Rockies, Sierra Nevada and Cascades.

**Yesterday's National Extremes:** (for the 48 contiguous states)  
High 106° in Needles, Calif. Low 26° in Dillon, Colo.

### NATIONAL CITIES

	Today			Thur.			Today			Thur.			
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	
Albuquerque	77	57	pc	79	59	pc	Louisville	82	61	s	82	65	pc
Atlanta	81	65	pc	85	68	pc	Memphis	88	67	pc	87	69	c
Baltimore	80	57	pc	77	55	s	Miami	91	80	pc	90	79	pc
Birmingham	86	58	s	88	57	pc	Minneapolis	69	53	pc	73	58	pc
Boise	85	59	pc	75	54	pc	Nashville	86	61	pc	87	66	pc
Boston	68	59	c	75	55	pc	New Orleans	81	73	t	84	72	pc
Charleston, SC	83	70	c	87	69	pc	New York City	73	60	pc	77	60	s
Charleston, WV	75	54	pc	77	56	pc	Oklahoma City	88	63	pc	84	66	t
Chicago	71	52	s	78	58	pc	Omaha	79	58	pc	83	67	pc
Cleveland	73	53	pc	73	55	s	Philadelphia	80	59	pc	77	59	pc
Dallas	92	73	pc	87	72	r	Portland, ME	68	52	c	72	47	pc
Denver													