



A semi-final heat races towards the finish line Friday during the Dogtona 400 wiener dog race on Main Street in Pendleton.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

## RACE: Event benefits the Children's Museum

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compete with two other pugs allowed a mid-competition costume change?

Could a man set a personal record of eating four hot dogs while keeping the contents from re-emerging?

And could dogs endowed with features that make them arguably the least conducive breed for racing cross the finish line without getting distracted?

The answer to all those questions was a resounding yes, as the doggy costume contest (won by Sophie) and hot dog eating contest (won by Travis Williams) preceded the fastest two-and-a-half seconds in sports — the wiener dog race.

The races were closely monitored (one of the heats was repeated after the results were contested), but in the end, it was Boomer of Kennewick who repeated for the title.

"He's just extra hyper," Daniels said, revealing Boomer's competitive edge.

The contestants weren't just racing for the pride of victory, but for a good cause — the Children's Museum of Eastern Oregon.

The community heavily sold the wiener dog races to first-year children's museum director Joanna



Elanore Bailey of Vancouver, Wash., looks over the race course with her dog Penny, 3, on Friday during the Dogtona 400 wiener dog race on Main Street in Pendleton.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Engle, and she came away impressed.

"It did not disappoint," she said.

Proceeds from the event will go toward the nonprofit's operations and maintaining its children's exhibits.

As for Boomer, Friday's victory gives him a chance to compete in the Northwest regional competition at an Oktoberfest in Aberdeen, Washington.

But even the racers who didn't come home with a prize were left with consoling words from emcee Sam Neal.

"Every wiener is a winner tonight," he said.

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## REVENUE: To pass, bill needs at least one Republican blessing

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revenues and expenses in the upcoming state budget.

That figure was partially closed by an assessment on health care providers passed by the legislature Wednesday, which is projected to narrow the gap by at least \$600 million, according to revenue impact estimates.

Many Democrats who spoke in favor of the bill Friday portrayed the four-year-old policy as hastily compiled and failing to meet its policy objective, which was to help the state's small businesses create jobs.

Instead, they argued, the break benefited "scrubs and suits" — doctors and lawyers.

"We created yet another giveaway to the very wealthy," said the bill's carrier, Phil Barnhart, a Democrat from Eugene.

Democrats point to figures from the Legislative Revenue Office, which found that in 2015, over 90 percent of beneficiaries made more than \$200,000 per year, and that more than 70 percent made at least \$500,000.

State Rep. Janelle Bynum, D-Happy Valley, said Oregon's economy was thriving before the tax break was passed in 2013.

"Why is small business thriving?" Bynum said. "It's not because of this tax break."

Conversely, many Republicans cast the legislation as a broken promise to the state's small businesspeople.

Rep. Sherrie Sprenger, a Republican from Scio, said the law could advance the state's "urban-rural divide," and said the state would be hard-pressed to find a small agricultural business that employed at least 10 people year round.

State Rep. Carl Wilson, R-Grants Pass, appealed to legislators' self-interest and said the tax would not be popular among voters.

"This is not going to play well in your district, you know it won't," Wilson said. "...I'm talking from Brooks to Portland, and from Grants Pass to Roseburg and Cottage Grove,

you've got a lot of constituents that are going to be damaged by this."

For a period, the debate over the bill took a detour as legislators debated whether it required a simple majority or a three-fifths majority.

The distinction, trivial at first glance, is actually essential when it comes to the Legislature's efforts to raise new taxes this session.

Under the Oregon Constitution, measures "raising revenue" require a 3/5 majority approval in both the House and Senate.

Democrats easily have a simple majority in both chambers, but are one seat shy of that three-fifths majority in both. So, assuming all Democrats vote for a revenue-raising policy, in order to pass, it needs at least one Republican signing on.

At issue Friday was whether the partial repeal of the tax cut qualified as "raising revenue."

The debate over that question quickly turned philosophical.

"They call a tax rate cut an expenditure," said House Minority Leader Mike McLane, R-Powell Butte, "As if somehow the premise is that the government owns your money."

But a June 22 legislative council opinion says otherwise.

"...We view (the bill) as adjusting the parameters of a tax benefit rather than enacting a new tax," Legislative Counsel Dexter Johnson wrote in a letter addressed to Kotek.

And some Democrats suggested it was fiscally irresponsible to maintain what a spokesman for the House Democratic Caucus called a "runaway tax break," or money that would otherwise be taxed and an amount that is projected to continue growing.

Kotek, in a speech toward the end of Friday's floor session, said the policy did not have the "targeted effect" of incentivizing small businesses to hire more people.

"We're not eliminating this break," Kotek said. "We're trying to fix it and make it more targeted."



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