

Term limits would remove 25 legislators from office

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau



Initiative Petition 19, a term limit measure backed by former GOP gubernatorial candidate Bud Pierce, would cost 25 sitting legislators their seats, according to analysis by a lawyer for SEIU Oregon State Council.

Voter approval of a proposal to enact term limits for state lawmakers would instantly wipe out nearly one-third of the Oregon Legislature membership, according to analysis by a lawyer for SEIU Oregon State Council.

Harry B. Wilson, SEIU's counsel, submitted the analysis on behalf of Matt Swanson, SEIU state council executive director, Monday to weigh on Initiative Petition 19 for the "Maintain a Citizen Legislature Act."

The act, proposed by former GOP gubernatorial nominee Bud Pierce, would prohibit state legislators from serving for more than eight years in a 12-year period. If approved for the ballot and passed by voters in 2018, the act would take effect immediately and apply retroactively.

"Immediately prohibiting 25 members of the Oregon Legislature from serving out their terms could have profound consequences," Wilson wrote.

The 20-member legislative Emergency Board, which allocates funds to agencies in between legislative sessions,

would lose eight members. House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, and Peter Courtney, D-Salem, the longest serving Senate president in the state's history, would be among the 25 lawmakers who would have to leave office under the initiative, as would Rep. Greg Smith, R-Heppner.

The Speaker and Senate President are the last two officials from the gubernatorial line of succession.

"It would interrupt the operation of the state boards and commissions, much of which are led in party by representatives and senators," Wilson wrote.

Swanson said the initiative is poorly written and would leave a potentially disruptive power vacuum.

Pierce, a Salem oncologist who has hinted at future political aspirations, acknowledged that the immediate effective date of the initiative could create short-term inconveniences at the Legislature. He said he chose to propose the measure as a statutory change, rather than a constitutional amendment, so that lawmakers could fix any flaws in the proposal after voter approval.

Term limits have worked well for state-level officials and in other states such as

California, Pierce said. "It's not a panacea, but I think it is an important step," Pierce said. "There is just too much power in the incumbency."

That power hold keeps the state from solving some of its biggest problems, he said.

He will need at 88,184 signatures to win a place on the 2018 ballot.

In all, 16 Democrats and nine Republicans would be required to leave office under the proposal: Senate President Courtney, Speaker Kotek, Rep. Sal Esquivel, R-Medford; Rep. Paul Holvey, D-Springfield; Rep. Phil Barnhart, D-Eugene; Rep. Nancy Nathanson, D-Eugene; Rep. Andy Olson, R-Albany; Rep. Sherrie Sprenger, R-Scio; Rep. Brian Clem, D-Salem; Rep. Jeff Barker, D-Aloha; Rep. Brad Witt, D-Clatskanie; Rep. Deborah Boone, D-Cannon Beach; Rep. Mitch Greenlick, D-Portland; Rep. Margaret Doherty, D-Tigard; Rep. Bill Kennemer, R-Oregon City; Rep. Gene Whisnant, R-Sunriver; Rep. Huffman, R-The Dalles; Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario; Sen. Floyd Prozanski, D-Eugene; Sen. Jackie Winters, R-Salem; Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose; Sen. Ginny Burdick, D-Portland; Sen. Richard Devlin, D-Tualatin; and Sen. Rod Monroe, D-Portland.

BRIEFLY

University of Oregon reduces size of tuition increase

EUGENE (AP) — Students will pay more to attend the University of Oregon next fall, but not as much as feared.

The university's Board of Trustees voted to increase in-state tuition by 6.6 percent instead of the 10.6 percent announced earlier this year.

State legislators last week provided \$70 million more than expected to higher education. They offered the money if public universities planning large tuition increases agreed to make the hikes less steep.

The Register-Guard reports the board voted by phone Tuesday. It was 11-0, with three members absent.

Man admits he shot wrong person, imprisoned 10 years

MEDFORD (AP) — An Oregon man has been ordered to spend more than a decade in prison after admitting he shot the wrong man in a dispute over money and then tried to break out of the Jackson County Jail.

The Mail Tribune reports 32-year-old John Robert Hermann was sentenced on Tuesday. He pleaded guilty to the March shooting, which injured Matthew Stephen Atkinson. Hermann also pleaded guilty to charges that he devised a scheme to escape from the jail's top floor by climbing down a rope made of bed sheets coerced from other inmates.

Deputy District Attorney Virginia Greer said Hermann and his girlfriend, Stephanie VanCleave, had forced Atkinson outside his home using a baseball bat. Atkinson was then shot in the groin area and survived.

Portland State University will use balloons to track eclipse

PORTLAND (AP) — Portland State University in Oregon will launch four high-altitude balloons equipped with GPS tracking systems and 360-degree video cameras during the upcoming solar eclipse.

The university said Wednesday that the balloons will allow anyone to watch a live stream online as the moon's shadow darkens a large swath of Oregon on Aug. 21.

One balloon will be a part of a larger live streaming project funded by NASA that involves 55 college and school teams throughout the U.S.

Three others are part of a PSU project. The first balloon will reach 70,000 feet in the air, the second will reach 100,000 feet and the third will go to 130,000 feet.

For comparison, the school says a typical airliner reaches a cruising altitude of 39,000 feet.

Paris-train hero Alek Skarlatos to star as himself in movie

ROSEBURG (AP) — Alek Skarlatos will portray himself in a film about his heroic tackle of a heavily armed gunman on a Paris-bound train.

The Oregon National Guardsman from Roseburg and two friends — Anthony Sadler and Spencer Stone — were traveling in August 2015 when they wrestled the would-be terrorist to the ground and disarmed him.

Skarlatos, from Roseburg, was honored for his courage on both sides of the Atlantic, and his sudden fame earned him a spot on TV's "Dancing With the Stars." He finished third.

Now Clint Eastwood is making a movie about the event, and the real-life heroes will star as themselves on the big screen.

Variety magazine broke the casting news Tuesday, and



In this Sept. 11, 2015 file photo, Oregon National Guardsman Alek Skarlatos, left, U.S. Airman Spencer Stone, center, and Anthony Sadler attend a parade held to honor the three Americans who stopped a gunman on a Paris-bound passenger train, in Sacramento, Calif.

reported that the film will be called "The 15:17 to Paris." It takes its name from the book

"The 15:17 to Paris: The True Story of a Terrorist, a Train, and Three American Heroes,"

written by the three friend along with author Jeffrey E. Stern.

Skarlatos' mother, Karen Skarlatos, said she had been sworn to secrecy about her son's turn on the big screen until after the magazine article was published.

"We're very proud," she told the Roseburg News-Review on Wednesday. "We're excited for Alek, and our happiness is for him. We're just thrilled that he's had these wonderful things come his way, because things could have turned out so differently."

Skarlatos said her son has never acted, not even in a school play.

"As I understand it was a last-minute thought that these boys would play themselves," she said. "I guess no one can be more authentic at being you than you."

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