

# Kitzhaber apologizes, to be fined \$1,000

SALEM (AP) — Former Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber apologized Wednesday for failing to publicly declare a potential conflict of interest between his elected position and his partner’s work and will pay a \$1,000 fine, capping a scandal that cost him the governorship.

The settlement is subject to final approval by the Oregon Government Ethics Commission, which meets on Friday.

“I apologize to Oregonians for failing to disclose a potential conflict of interest, although the ethical violations at issue were wholly unintentional,” Kitzhaber said in a statement.

As part of the agreement, the commission will drop further investigation into whether Sylvia Hayes used her relationship as Kitzhaber’s fiancée to win contracts for her green-energy consulting business. The commission noted it could have assessed fines of up to a total of \$20,000 for the known violations, which included Kitzhaber being credited frequent flier miles once when he traveled on state business.



AP Photo/Don Ryan, File

**Former Gov. Kitzhaber has agreed with the state’s ethics commission to pay a \$1,000 fine for allegedly violating ethics codes by failing to publicly declare a potential conflict of interest and for claiming airline travel miles for personal use that accumulated while on official business during his tenure.**

After investigating the matter, the U.S. Department of Justice said in June that the couple won’t face criminal charges. Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum previously announced the state would not bring charges.

The ethics commission said there were potential conflicts of interest when Kitzhaber’s duties as governor overlapped with the issues that Hayes’

consulting firm, 3E Strategies, was receiving payment for. 3E Strategies could have had financial gains or losses stemming from Kitzhaber’s policy decisions and public appearances, the commission said.

Oregon law “requires an elected public official to make a public announcement of the nature of the potential conflict of interest prior to taking any official action on

the matter,” the commission wrote, adding that Kitzhaber failed to make such public announcements, for example through press releases.

The former governor said Wednesday he had not perceived a conflict of interest because Hayes’ work for non-profit organizations wasn’t directed at influencing state policy, but to educate people on issues. He said he had referred matters regarding potential conflicts to general counsel, and wasn’t advised he needed to publicly disclose them.

“Having said that, I do not dispute the conclusion by the Ethics Commission that my failure to declare a potential conflict of interest violated the letter of law,” Kitzhaber said Wednesday. “I accept full responsibility for this violation and believe the proposed settlement to be a fair resolution of the case.”

Secretary of State Kate Brown, also a Democrat, assumed Oregon’s highest office after Kitzhaber resigned just over a month into his fourth term. She was elected last November to complete his term and is a candidate for re-election in 2018.

## BRIEFLY

### Trial begins in case of woman held captive for 44 days

DALLAS (AP) — An Oregon woman who was held captive in a West Salem house for more than a month described the brutal sexual assaults and torture during the trial for the man charged with perpetrating the acts.

*The Statesman Journal* reports 48-year-old Ronnie Lee Jr. stood trial on Tuesday in the Polk County Courthouse after more than two years of hearings and motions.

Prosecutors say the 31-year-victim was held for six weeks by Lee after she visited his residence in an attempt to get heroin in 2015.

The victim says she was raped, assaulted and sodomized dozens of times. She was forced to sleep on the bathroom floor and given very little food.

Lee’s attorney Mark Brownlee disputed the victim’s account, claiming the context of the events occurred in the “drug world.”

### More Oregon students are homeless than last year, state says

SALEM (AP) — The number of homeless Oregon students has increased for a fourth consecutive year.

The state Education Department said Wednesday that 22,541 students were homeless at some point during the 2016-17 academic year — up 5.6 percent from the year before.

Dona Bolt, the state’s homeless education program coordinator, says some of the jump is tied to increased awareness about the importance of reporting homeless student data. She says a lack of affordable housing is another factor.

The homeless classification doesn’t necessarily mean the child is sleeping in a shelter or on the streets. The tag also applies to students who lack a fixed and regular nighttime residence, such as those who live in motels or bounce between the homes of friends and relatives.

Federal rules require school districts to hire a liaison to help these students get to school and have the supplies needed to learn.

### Idaho farm explores growing blueberries on commercial level

SALEM (AP) — A farm in southwestern Idaho is attempting to grow blueberries on a commercial scale, making it one of the first producers in the state if the project proves successful.

*The Capital Press* reports a major hop grower and a University of Idaho researcher are coordinating efforts on figuring out how to make blueberries grow in the region.

Brock and Phillip Obendorf Farms in Parma has been growing blueberries for a couple of years, but Phil Obendorf says the yield is not enough to make it profitable. The problem is with the soil’s level of acidity.

University researcher Essie Fallahi has been looking into how to alter the soil to support the growth. He’s exploring ways to make the soil more acidic so the plants can better absorb micronutrients.

# State senator files sex harassment complaint

## Sen. Sara Gelser asks for expulsion of Sen. Kruse

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**  
*Capital Bureau*

SALEM — State Sen. Sara Gelser Wednesday called for the expulsion of a fellow senator who she says for years subjected her to unwanted touching.

Gelser, D-Corvallis, filed a detailed formal complaint against State Sen. Jeff Kruse, R-Roseburg, a move that represents a step up from two separate informal reports she has made about Kruse’s behavior since early 2016.

She also alleged Wednesday that Kruse has inappropriately touched more than a dozen other women at the Capitol.

Kruse, contacted by the EO/Pamplin Capital Bureau while leaving the Senate Republican Caucus office Wednesday, declined to comment.

“I’m not going to say anything to

anybody,” Kruse, who has denied allegations of inappropriate behavior in previous media interviews, said.

He added that since a formal investigation was ongoing, “we need to let the process work.”

Gelser’s complaint, provided Wednesday by the Office of Legislative Counsel, says Kruse repeatedly touched her in ways that made her feel uncomfortable.

Gelser and another female state senator who has not been identified had previously made informal complaints about Kruse’s behavior to the Legislature’s human resources and legal teams.

The informal complaint process is typically confidential. The allegations emerged publicly, though, in the past month, as more people who have experienced sexual harassment came forward with their experiences in industries ranging from politics to entertainment.

Until Wednesday, Gelser had been reluctant to publicly describe speci-

cally what she had experienced, saying she did not feel she had to describe salacious details to be believed.

In her formal complaint, though, Gelser, who was elected to the Senate in 2014 and served in the House of Representatives prior to that, described multiple incidents where Kruse had touched her in ways that made her feel uncomfortable, going back to 2011.

She also described avoiding meetings with Kruse, taking the stairs instead of elevators to avoid him, and not allowing her staff or interns to meet with him to protect them from harassment.

Gelser described being “increasingly reluctant” to meet with Kruse because he touched her in “ways that made (her) feel uncomfortable.”

“This included hugs in which he pressed his full body against mine, wrapping his arm tightly around me, kissing my cheek, or whispering in my ear,” Gelser wrote. “I would step away from these behaviors but was concerned that I would offend or embarrass him by discussing the behavior. I simply tried to avoid meeting with him unless absolutely necessary.”



Kruse

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	Today			Fri.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Astoria	50	41	sh	50	40	pc
Baker City	48	27	sn	45	21	pc
Bend	44	30	sn	43	22	pc
Brookings	51	41	sh	53	39	c
Burns	42	24	sn	40	14	pc
Enterprise	45	31	sn	40	23	sn
Eugene	48	37	sh	51	31	c
Heppner	50	35	sh	48	30	pc
Hermiston	53	39	sh	53	31	c
John Day	45	31	sn	40	26	pc
Klamath Falls	43	23	c	43	17	pc
La Grande	48	33	sn	44	27	sh
Meacham	45	32	sn	40	26	c
Medford	49	36	r	49	27	c
Newport	51	41	sh	52	39	r
North Bend	52	41	sh	53	38	c
Ontario	53	32	c	49	25	pc
Pasco	53	37	c	54	32	c
Pendleton	51	37	sh	49	31	c
Portland	49	40	sh	50	38	c
Redmond	47	29	c	45	21	pc
Salem	49	40	sh	53	36	sh
Spokane	43	32	c	42	30	c
Ukiah	43	30	sn	40	23	pc
Vancouver	48	40	sh	50	37	c
Walla Walla	51	38	sh	49	36	c
Yakima	51	29	c	52	29	c

### WORLD CITIES

	Today			Fri.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Beijing	45	28	s	45	17	pc
Hong Kong	80	75	c	81	74	s
Jerusalem	74	54	pc	75	55	pc
London	56	35	c	48	35	pc
Mexico City	73	46	pc	74	47	pc
Moscow	39	30	sn	35	32	c
Paris	50	40	pc	52	35	pc
Rome	62	46	s	63	46	s
Seoul	42	30	s	50	24	r
Sydney	77	67	t	75	67	t
Tokyo	59	45	pc	55	46	pc

### WINDS

(in mph)	Today	Friday
Boardman	SW 6-12	WSW 8-16
Pendleton	WSW 6-12	WSW 8-16

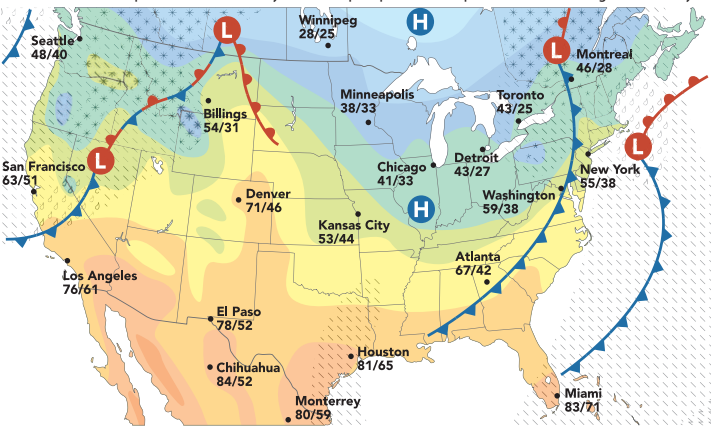
### UV INDEX TODAY

0	1	1	1	0	0
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:** Rain will soak part of New England today, and showers will riddle the interior Northeast. Showers will dampen South Florida and eastern Texas. A storm will affect the Northwest with rain and mountain snow.

**Yesterday's National Extremes:** (for the 48 contiguous states)

**High 89°** in Kingsville, Texas

**Low 1°** in West Yellowstone, Mont.

### NATIONAL CITIES

	Today			Fri.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Albuquerque	71	47	s	72	40	pc
Atlanta	67	42	pc	66	47	s
Memphis	62	45	pc	72	63	c
Miami	83	71	c	83	71	pc
Milwaukee	41	33	pc	45	40	r
Minneapolis	38	33	c	45	29	r
Nashville	57	34	s	65	56	pc
New Orleans	76	57	s	78	63	pc
New York City	55	38	r	49	36	s
Oklahoma City	60	54	c	78	47	c
Omaha	51	42	pc	62	38	c
Philadelphia	58	38	pc	50	36	s
Phoenix	86	61	s	84	59	pc
Portland, ME	46	36	r	42	21	pc
Providence	53	34	r	48	27	s
Raleigh	65	35	s	58	39	s
Rapid City	68	35	s	44	25	c
San Diego	56	29	r	48	20	pc
Sacramento	61	42	sh	60	35	s
St. Louis	49	37	s	58	54	c
Salt Lake City	62	47	c	47	27	sn
San Francisco	63	51	r	62	46	s
Seattle	48	40	c	48	42	r
Tucson	88	54	s	85	54	pc
Washington, DC	59	38	s	53	41	s
Wichita	58	51	pc	72	43	c

**Weather (W):** s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice.