

Oregon Dreamers heading to State of the Union

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

When Donald Trump gives his State of the Union address, he'll see the faces of 24-year-old Aldo Solano of Portland and at least 25 other "Dreamers" who could face deportation without congressional action.

U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Oregon, was the first member of the House to announce he would boycott the president's annual speech to the joint session of Congress Jan. 30. Instead, he is sending Solano.

Solano said he wants to attend the event to advocate for passage of immigration reform that will protect undocumented immigrants who came to the country as children and allow them to legally work and study here.

"We need to be able to share our stories in whatever way possible and provide more create more exposure for this issue. This is just another way to do it," he said.

In a Facebook post Jan. 22, Blumenauer wrote that he was frustrated by the lack of progress in protecting "Dreamers."

"Since I won't be attending the (State of the Union), I'll be sending an Oregon 'Dreamer' in my place to remind Trump that these are real people with



U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Oregon, and DACA recipient Aldo Solano of Portland speak to reporters at the congressman's office in Northeast Portland, Friday. Solano will represent Blumenauer at President Donald Trump's State of the Union address.

families and jobs, who are vital to our communities. They deserve certainty and protection."

Since then, at least 24 House Democrats plan to bring or send "Dreamers" to the event, according to ABC News. That number includes Oregon's U.S. Reps. Suzanne Bonamici, Peter DeFazio and Kurt Schrader, the Pamplin-EO Capital Bureau has confirmed.

Oregon's U.S. Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden

also plan to bring recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program as guests to the speech, their spokesperson said.

Solano said he is willing take the risk of negative attention from the administration to advocate for protecting the 800,000 DACA recipients from deportation. More than 11,000 of them live in Oregon. Ending DACA would cost the state more than \$605.6 million annually in loss of gross domestic product,

according to the Center for American Progress.

The program, established in 2012 by President Barack Obama, has allowed Solano to legally work and attend college in the country.

Solano studies at Portland Community College and works as the policy director for the Oregon Latino Health Coalition.

Solano's parents, who were agricultural migrant workers, brought him at age 6 to the country from Mexico

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—Earl Blumenauer, U.S. Representative

provision was intended to give Congress time to pass DACA legislatively.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions has said the open-ended program was "an unconstitutional exercise of authority by the Executive Branch."

Without congressional action, DACA recipients face deportation.

The Trump administration's immigration plan released Jan. 25 limits family-based immigration, among other measures, in exchange for preservation of the DACA, according to Bloomberg Politics.

It gives a 10- to 12-year path to citizenship to about 1.8 million DACA recipients, according to multiple news reports.

But Democrats and DACA recipients are wary of the proposal.

Since Trump took office, more than 2,000 of his statements have been fact-checked as either misleading or "in some cases, outright falsehoods," Blumenauer said. "Words don't seem to matter."

Solano said he has lost trust in the president.

"It's hard to wrap your head around it because he's going to say something new tomorrow," Solano said. "You just can't honestly trust anything that he says."

Oregon marijuana racketeering lawsuit settled

Controversy likely to continue with new complaint

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Bureau

Rural landowners in Oregon have settled a lawsuit filed that accused their marijuana-growing neighbors of violating federal anti-racketeering law and reducing property values.

However, the question of whether Oregon marijuana growers can be successfully sued under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization Act may still be answered, as a similar lawsuit was recently filed against another cannabis operation.

Last year, Rachel and Erin McCart of Beavercreek filed a RICO complaint against more than 40 defendants involved in medical marijuana production, including landowners, growers, retailers and a bank.

Apart from lowering the value of their 11-acre property, the McCartes claimed that two nearby marijuana operations attracted unwanted visitors, increased traffic and generated foul odors, among other problems.

While medical and recreational marijuana were legalized by Oregon voters, the plaintiffs claimed their neighbors were still subject to RICO because the substance is illegal under federal law.

"Given the strict federal prohibitions against each of those purposes, defendants knew these purposes could only be accomplished via a pattern of racketeering. In furtherance of that goal, defendants pooled their resources and achieved enterprise efficiency that no one defendant could have achieved individually," the complaint said.

The complaint was filed on the heels of a ruling by the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which ruled that RICO claims should be allowed to proceed against a Colorado marijuana operation.

With the large number of defendants in the Oregon case, initial procedural steps took several months before the defendants filed motions to dismiss the complaint.

U.S. Magistrate Judge John Acosta in Portland had planned to take those requests under advisement in early 2018, but then stayed proceedings in the case when

the parties notified him of a pending settlement.

On Jan. 26, the judge dismissed the case with prejudice, meaning it can't be refiled, at the request of the plaintiffs, "without an award of fees or costs to any party."

Rachel McCart, who is an attorney, did not respond to requests to comment on the settlement deal.

Cliff Davidson, an attorney for a landowner defendant, said the dispute has been resolved but he cannot discuss the terms of the agreement.

In light of uncertainty about marijuana enforcement from the Trump administration, controversies over the crop are bound to continue, he said.

Under the Obama administration, the U.S. Justice Department issued a memorandum allowing states to regulate legalized marijuana as long as they followed certain parameters, such as keeping it out of interstate commerce.

However, the memorandum was withdrawn by current U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who has instead directed federal prosecutors to use their discretion in pursuing criminal cases against marijuana producers

in states where it's legal.

Alleging violations of the federal RICO statute is an attractive strategy for plaintiffs, since it allows them to recover triple the amount of damages as well as attorney fees, said Davidson.

"If you're a plaintiff, it's a good way to maximize the damages you can recover," he said. "It's troubling. It's just another form of shakedown."

Ten rural landowners near Lebanon filed a lawsuit last month alleging RICO viola-

tions against seven neighboring marijuana growers and a mortgage company that had loaned them money to buy property.

The complaint claims the defendants built a greenhouse on the property and converted other buildings to grow and process the psychoactive crop, in addition to cultivating it outdoors in 2017.

Aside from odors, traffic and noise, the marijuana operation has reduced property values due to concerns

about the potential for armed robberies and other crime, the complaint said.

Neighbors also fear for their safety due to pit bull guard dogs roaming loose and an uncontrolled fire that resulted from the burning of marijuana debris, the plaintiffs claim.

Rachel McCart is representing the plaintiffs in the new lawsuit, which has been assigned to U.S. District Judge Michael McShane in Eugene.

OLCC triples penalties for underage marijuana sales

PORTLAND (AP) — The state has announced it will temporarily increase penalties for those who unintentionally sell marijuana to minors.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports the announcement was made Thursday by the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, which oversees the state's recreational marijuana industry.

It comes on the heels of a statewide sting in December in which almost 20 percent of state-licensed marijuana retailers sold pot to customers under 21.

The commission's executive director Steve Marks called the results of the operation "unacceptable."

In response, the commission announced it will triple penalties for those who sell marijuana to minors unintentionally.

Those first-time offenders will now face a 30-day license suspension or a fine of \$4,950. The previous penalty was a 10-day license suspension or a \$1,650 fine.

The temporary rule will take effect Friday and remain in effect for six months.

Medford woman jailed on child neglect charges

MEDFORD (AP) — Misdemeanor neglect charges have been filed against an Oregon woman whose children reportedly put drug needles in their mouths while they were left with strangers in a motel room.

Tisha Watson pleaded not guilty at her arraignment earlier this month. The Mail Tribune reports Watson was booked into the Jackson County Jail. Bail was set at \$50,000.

In court documents, police said Watson appeared unable to provide for the two

children, one of whom is a toddler. Police said she admitted leaving the kids with a stranger, and that they possibly ingested a drug at a motel in downtown Medford.

Court records show Watson has a history of arrests on accusations of driving under the influence of intoxicants, drug possession and driving while her license was suspended or revoked.

Smith hires new communication director

Jordan Payne, a senior at Eastern Oregon University who will graduate with a degree in communications this spring, will serve as Rep. Greg Smith's new communication director.

Payne will handle media inquiries and coordinate community and public outreach for Smith's office, according to an announcement made Thursday. Smith is serving in his ninth term representing District 57 in the House of Representatives.

In a statement, Smith called Payne passionate and motivated and said he will make "a great asset to our legislative team."

At EOU Payne is a student body senator and was captain of the football team for the 2017 season.

A news release sent out on Wednesday by EOU's Small Business Development Center also announced that Payne will serve as the center's office manager and communications coordinator. Smith, in his private job running a consulting business, is the director of EOU's Small Business Development Center, which provides free confidential advising to potential and current small business owners.

"I'm very excited to be a part of the EOU SBDC and working with some great co-workers. I'm looking forward to working with clients that are looking to start or grow their business," Payne said in the release.

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<p style="color: blue; font-weight: bold;">2015 JEEP RENEGADE LIMITED 4X4</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">Leather, Loaded!</p> <p style="font-size: large; color: red; font-weight: bold;">\$20,588</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">T5832P</p>	<p style="color: blue; font-weight: bold;">2006 CHEVY SILVERADO 4X4</p> <p style="font-size: large; color: red; font-weight: bold;">\$21,488</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">T2122TA</p>	<p style="color: blue; font-weight: bold;">2017 DODGE CHARGER AWD</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">SXT, 26k Miles, Must See!</p> <p style="font-size: large; color: red; font-weight: bold;">\$22,879</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">T5835P</p>	<p style="color: blue; font-weight: bold;">2006 DODGE RAM 2500 4X4</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">162k Miles, Auto</p> <p style="font-size: large; color: red; font-weight: bold;">\$23,777</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">T2139B</p>

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