

Oregon becomes first rent-controlled state

Gov. Brown signs bill to limit rent hikes

By PARIS ACHEN
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Oregon on Thursday enacted the nation’s farthest-reaching law limiting rent increases and restricting no-fault evictions, providing immediate protection to roughly 1 million renters across the state.

Senate Bill 608, took effect with Gov. Kate Brown’s signature just after noon Thursday, making Oregon the only state in the nation with statewide rent control.

“This is a groundbreaking piece of legislation as we are the first state in the nation to enact this level of protection for our renters,” Brown said Thursday. “The bill is a critical tool for stabilizing the rental market throughout the state of Oregon. It will provide immediate relief to Oregonians struggling to keep up with rising rents in a tight rental market. But it doesn’t work on its own. It’s going to take much more work to ensure every Oregonian ... has access to housing choices that will ensure that they and their families can thrive.”

A key component of the



AP Photo/Sarah Zimmerman

Gov. Kate Brown holds up a signed rent control bill on Thursday at the Oregon Capitol in Salem.

new law is that landlords in most circumstances can’t raise rents by more than 7 percent on top of inflationary increase tied to the Consumer Price Index.

That’s a bigger boost than some tenant advocates had wanted.

“Seven percent, plus CPI, could be too expensive for some tenants, but for a long time, some landlords have been giving 20 percent, 40 percent, 100 percent increases, so the sooner we can take those off the table, the more predictability and stability tenants have,” said Danny Moran, spokesman for House Speaker Tina

Kotek, D-Portland.

The rent increase limits protect tenants in roughly five out of six of rental homes in Oregon.

There are an estimated 602,178 renter-occupied homes and 1,445,270 tenants, according to the most recent estimate from the American Community Survey.

Rentals built after Feb. 28, 2004, aren’t subject to limit. Kotek who authored the bill, added that condition to encourage construction of rental units.

By legislative standards, the legislation passed at lightning speed.

“I have never heard of

a bill moving this quickly before,” said Jim Straub, legislative director of the Oregon Rental Housing Association. Straub, who has been the association’s legislative director for 10 years, is the grandson of Gov. Bob Straub and a longtime observer of state politics.

The Legislature convened Jan.22, the Senate passed the bill Feb. 12, and the House followed suit on Tuesday, Feb. 26, sending it to the governor.

The law was a top priority for Kotek this year.

“We wanted this bill to move quickly in order to protect those tenants, which is why the bill has an emer-

HOW DOES IT WORK?

How do landlords calculate the maximum rent allowed under the new law?

Until Sept. 30, the state will use 3.3 percent for CPI, according to Kotek’s office. The law does not apply to rent increase notices sent out before Thursday.

How does the rent cap pencil out?

The median rent for a 2-bedroom unit in Oregon in 2017 was \$1,043 per month. The maximum increase in a year under the law would be \$107.42 for that two-bedroom apartment. In Portland, a 2-bedroom unit averages \$1,217. The maximum increase would be \$125.25.

Who is exempt?

- Landlords who own rental homes with a certificate of occupancy dated after Feb. 28, 2004, are not restricted by the 7 percent, plus CPI, cap. They may raise rents as much as they want. They still have to pay the relocation

fee if they evict a tenant for no fault.

- Landlords who own four or fewer rental units are not required to pay the relocation fee equal to one month’s rent when they ask a tenant to move because they want to move into the property, sell the property or make major upgrades to the property. These landlords are restricted by the rental increase cap.

How is the law enforced?

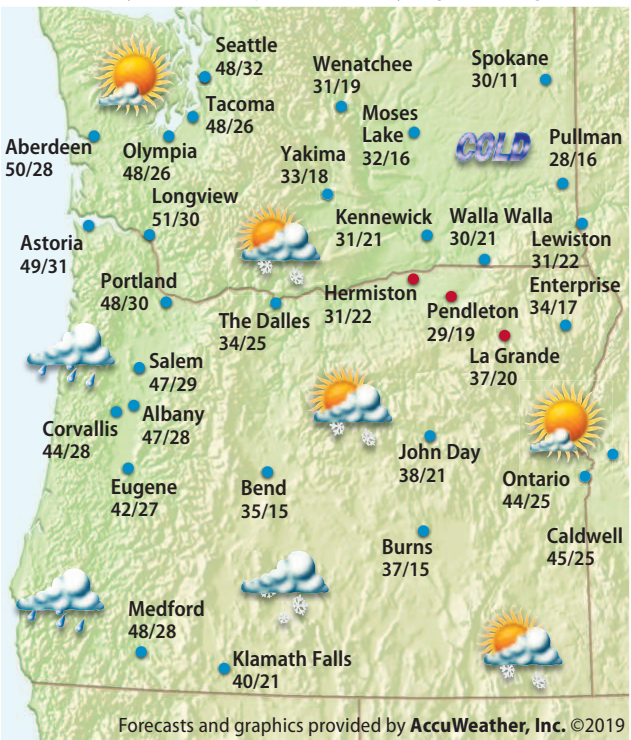
Tenants may sue their landlord in court if the landlord violates the rent cap or evicts them at no fault for a reason other than those allowed under the law. Landlords may legally evict a tenant for no fault if the landlord plans to sell the property, move into the property or their family plans to move into the property. Landlords also may evict a tenant for upgrades and renovations that cannot be done while the tenant occupies the property.

Forecast for Pendleton Area

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Mostly sunny and quite cold	Very cold with clouds and sun	Areas of low clouds; very cold	Partly sunny and very cold	Cloudy and frigid
PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
29° 19°	27° 18°	23° 12°	21° 10°	20° 15°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
31° 22°	30° 19°	27° 11°	24° 11°	24° 19°

OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today’s weather. Temperatures are today’s highs and tonight’s lows.



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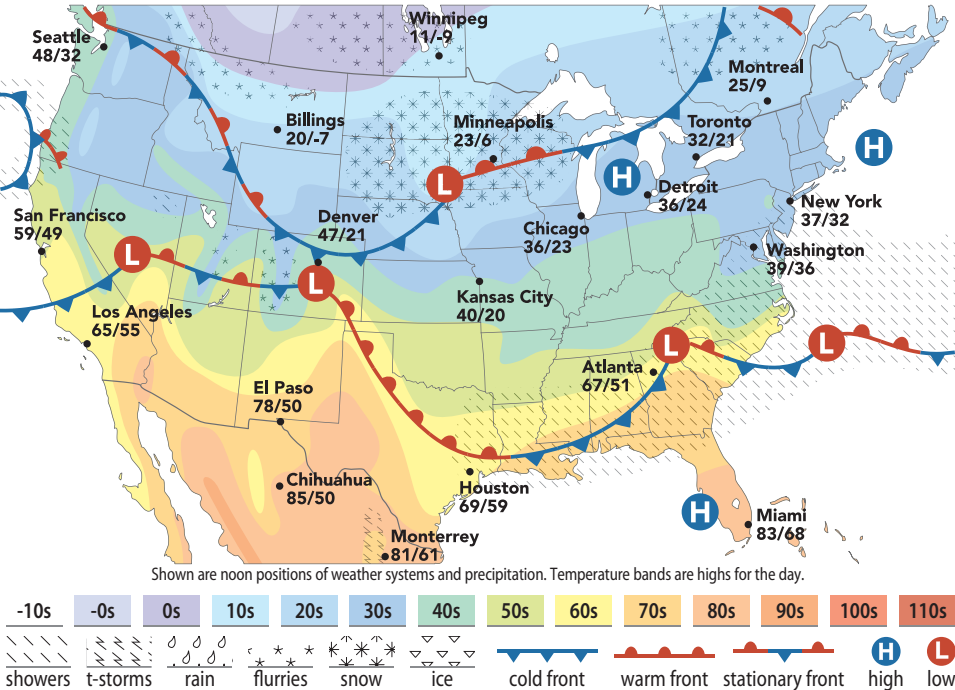
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NATIONAL EXTREMES

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

High 86° in Homestead, Fla. Low -27° in Grayling, Mich.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



BRIEFLY

Lawsuits: State ignored sexual assaults at women’s prison

SALEM (AP) — Sexual abuse and rape are not only “widespread” at Oregon’s only women’s prison, but the violence is ignored by prison staff and those who report it are punished, according to a series of multimillion-dollar lawsuits filed against the Oregon Department of Corrections.

The *Statesman Journal* reports that five current and former inmates at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility are suing the state, claiming they were raped, groped, assaulted and molested by a nurse in the medical unit. The plaintiffs accuse prison staff of ignoring and allowing the nurse’s predatory behavior to continue for years — and of retaliating against inmates who reported the alleged abuse.

Prison officials told the newspaper they take all allegations of sexual assault seriously, but declined to comment on the claims, citing the pending litigation.

An investigation by Oregon State Police found that 11 inmates reported some form of sexual contact with the nurse, but prosecutors declined to charge him, saying some of the accounts were unreliable and the case was “unsupportable” as a whole.

The nurse resigned from his position on Jan. 31, 2018.

Sex abuse cases have dogged Coffee Creek since it opened in Wilsonville in 2001 and through seven superintendent changes.

High profile cases include a former groundskeeper arrested in 2009 for sexually abusing inmates in a “rape shed” at the prison and a former corrections officer, who was convicted of custodial sexual misconduct in 2016 for repeatedly coercing an inmate into sex.

Pioneering former secretary of state Norma Paulus dies

PORTLAND (AP) — Pioneering Oregon Republican Norma Paulus, who was the first woman elected to statewide office, has died.

The *Oregonian*/OregonLive reports Paulus died Thursday after spending time in hospice for health problems related to dementia, according to Kerry Tymchuk, a longtime friend of Paulus. Paulus was 85.

Paulus was a member of the Legislature, Oregon’s secretary of state from 1977 to 1985, her party’s nominee for governor in 1986 and the state’s elected superintendent of schools for two terms in the 1990s.

A fiscal conservative, Paulus was a feminist and environmentalist who crafted bipartisan legislation with Democratic women in

the House in the 1970s and championed the auditor’s role in the secretary of state’s office.

Paulus grew up in poverty in Eastern Oregon.

She was a founding member of the Oregon Women’s Political Caucus and helped push the Equal Rights Amendment in Oregon.

Nine kids taken to hospital after Hood River school bus crash

HOOD RIVER (AP) — Police say nine children were taken to a hospital after the driver of their Hood River County school bus crashed into a ditch.

Oregon State Police troopers say the bus was headed south on Highway 281 at about 10:15 a.m. Wednesday when driver David Johnson went off the roadway and into a ditch.

Police say the bus struck an embankment before it ended up back on the road.

Officials said Johnson then drove to the school.

Police say after arriving, nine children complained of pain and were taken to a local hospital.

Troopers are investigating the incident with help from the Hood River County Sheriff’s Office and the county district attorney’s office.

Police say the district and Johnson are cooperating with the investigation.

Suit: School district failed to protect student from coach

DUFUR (AP) — An 18-year-old high school graduate east of Portland has filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against the Dufur School District, contending it failed to intervene to stop an ex-track coach from sexually abusing her just a few years after another coach was convicted of similar conduct.

The *Oregonian*/OregonLive reports the student says then-track coach Ty Lee Wyman sexually abused her at the school and in his home in 2017.

The lawsuit says at least five school employees including the principal witnessed Wyman’s “inappropriate and predatory behavior” yet took no steps to investigate or protect the student.

Wyman was sentenced in August to over three years in prison for sexually abusing two students.

Superintendent Jack Henderson, of Dufur School District #29, said he couldn’t comment on the specific allegations in the suit but said the district cooperated with an investigation and has intensified staff training.

CORRECTIONS: 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.

EAST OREGONIAN

— Founded Oct. 16, 1875 —

211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton 541-276-2211
333 E. Main St., Hermiston 541-567-6211
Office hours: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
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East Oregonian (USPS 164-980) is published daily except Sunday,
Monday and postal holidays, by the EO Media Group, 211 S.E. Byers
Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801. Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, OR.
Postmaster: send address changes to
East Oregonian, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801.
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COMMERCIAL PRINTING

Production Manager: Mike Jensen
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