

TV celebrities and coaches charged in college bribery scheme

BOSTON (AP) — Fifty people, including Hollywood stars Felicity Huffman and Lori Loughlin, were charged Tuesday in a scheme in which wealthy parents allegedly bribed college coaches and other insiders to get their children into some of the nation's most selective schools.

Federal authorities called it the biggest college admissions scam ever prosecuted by the U.S. Justice Department, with the parents accused of paying an estimated \$25 million in bribes.

At least nine athletic coaches and 33 parents, many of them prominent in law, finance, fashion, the food and beverage industry and other fields, were charged. Dozens, including Huffman, the Emmy-winning star of ABC's "Desperate Housewives," were arrested by midday.

"These parents are a catalog of wealth and privilege," U.S. Attorney Andrew Lelling said in announcing the results of a fraud and conspiracy investigation code-named Operation Varsity Blues.

The coaches worked at such schools as Yale, Stanford, Georgetown, Wake Forest, the University of Texas, the University of Southern California and the University of California at Los Angeles. A former Yale soccer coach pleaded guilty



AP Photo/Steven Senne

William "Rick" Singer, founder of the Edge College & Career Network, departs federal court in Boston on Tuesday after he pleaded guilty to charges in a nationwide college admissions bribery scandal.

and helped build the case against others.

Two more of those charged — Stanford's sailing coach and the college-admissions consultant at the very center of the scheme — pleaded guilty Tuesday in Boston. Others appeared in court and were released on bail.

Huffman appeared in a Los Angeles courthouse where a magistrate judge said she could be released on a \$250,000 bond.

No students were charged, with authorities saying that in many cases the teenagers were unaware of what was going on. Several of the colleges involved made no mention of taking any action against the students.

The scandal is certain to inflame longstanding complaints that children of the wealthy and well-connected have the inside track in college admissions — sometimes through big, timely donations from their parents — and that privilege begets privilege.

College consultants were not exactly shocked by the allegations.

"This story is the proof that there will always be a market for parents who have the resources and are desperate to get their kid one more success," said Mark Sklarow, CEO of the Independent Educational Consultants Association.

"This was shopping for name-brand product and being willing to spend what-

ever it took."

The central figure in the scheme was identified as admissions consultant William "Rick" Singer, founder of the Edge College & Career Network of Newport Beach, California. He pleaded guilty, as did Stanford's John Vandemoer.

Singer's lawyer, Donald Heller, said his client intends to cooperate fully with prosecutors and is "remorseful and contrite and wants to move on with his life."

Prosecutors said that parents paid Singer big money from 2011 through last month to bribe coaches and administrators to falsely make their children look like star athletes to boost their chances of getting accepted. The consultant also hired ringers to take college entrance exams for students, and paid off insiders at testing centers to correct students' answers.

Some parents spent hundreds of thousands of dollars and some as much as \$6.5 million to guarantee their children's admission, officials said.

"For every student admitted through fraud, an honest and genuinely talented student was rejected," Lelling said.

Several defendants, including Huffman, were charged with conspiracy to commit fraud, punishable by up to 20 years in prison.

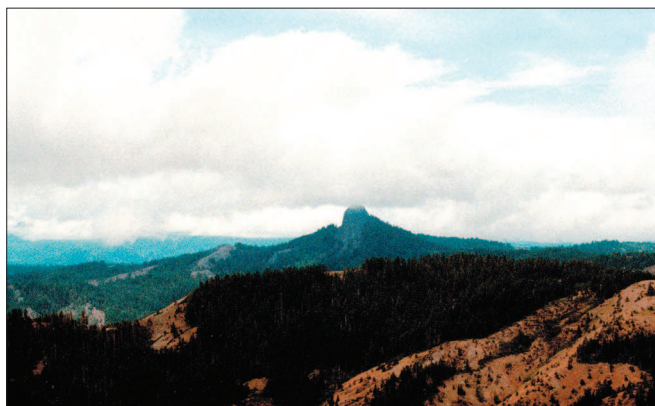
Trump's national monument changes in spotlight

Southern Oregon monument hasn't been altered

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — As Democrats in Congress prepare to scrutinize President Donald Trump's review of 27 national monuments, most of the recommendations made by ex-Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke remain unfinished as other matters consume the White House.

Trump acted quickly in December 2017 on Zinke's recommendations to shrink two sprawling Utah monuments that had been criticized as federal government overreach by the state's Republican leaders since their creation by Democratic Presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton.

But in the 15 months since Trump downsized the Utah monuments, the president has done nothing with Zinke's proposal to shrink two more monuments, including the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Southern Oregon, and change rules at six others, including allowing



AP Photo/Jeff Barnard, File

In this July 6, 2000, file photo, Pilot Rock rises into the clouds in the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument near Lincoln.

commercial fishing inside three marine monuments in waters off New England, Hawaii and American Samoa.

Zinke resigned in December amid multiple ethics investigations — and has joined a Washington, D.C., lobbying firm. Trump has nominated as his replacement Acting Interior Secretary David Bernhardt, a former lobbyist for the oil and gas industry and other corporate interests.

A sweeping public lands bill signed into law on Tuesday by Trump creates five new monuments — two of which Zinke sug-

gested — but none of the reductions or other changes he recommended.

The monument review was based on arguments from Trump and others that a law signed by President Theodore Roosevelt allowing presidents to declare monuments had been improperly used to protect wide expanses of lands instead of places with particular historical or archaeological value.

On Wednesday, the House Natural Resources Committee will host a hearing that the Democratic majority said will focus on the "inadequate"

nature of the administration's review. Democrats claim the move to shrink the monuments was illegal and overlooked overwhelming support for keeping them intact.

Speakers include tribal leaders, a leading paleontologist and a conservationist who are expected to say their arguments for protecting the land were ignored during the review.

People and groups who advocated for the changes are disappointed with the inaction and in the dark about White House plans. Some critics of the monument review say the delay shows Trump's intent all along was to launch the sweeping review as justification to shrink the Utah monuments to appease powerful politicians such as former U.S. Sen. Orrin Hatch, who in return gave the president support for his causes.

Environmental, tribal and paleontology groups called the review an attack on protected land that put at risk habitat rich with ancient artifacts, wildlife and dinosaur fossils and sued to challenge the shrinkages at the Utah monuments.

Change: Some would prefer to eliminate it

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"I am in the fourth generation of a family afflicted by SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder), and it is already hard enough to get up on gray winter mornings," Newberg resident Carol Kelley testified. "I hate to think of sunrise times an hour later all winter long than they are currently. Plus as an educator, I don't like the idea of schoolchildren walking to school in darkness throughout our four to five months of fall and winter before lighter mornings return."

Thatcher said Tuesday that her staff crunched the numbers for locations throughout Oregon and found that, if daylight saving time were adopted for the whole year, the latest sunrise in Oregon — on the winter solstice — would come around 9 a.m. on the north coast.

Despite its name, standard time is only in effect from November to March — less than half the year. Thanks to that switch, during the winter, the sun rises earlier in the morning, but it sets earlier as well.

Aileen Kaye, a Turner resident, told senators that keeping daylight saving time all year would make life easier for her.

"I just would love more daylight in the evenings," Kaye said. "We have horses, and they can stay out later. We can clean their stalls in the daylight. It's wonderful."

Marilyn Grendele wrote to the committee that for elderly Oregonians like her, "more daylight in the evening frees us to go out and not fear driving home in the dark."

Rebecca Gladstone of Eugene said she just wants to see a uniform time — for the whole year, and for the whole West Coast, including Washington, California and British Columbia — whether it's standard time or daylight time.

"People don't like to change back and forth in the fall and the spring," Gladstone said. She also pointed to studies that suggest people are at higher risk of a heart attack after switching to daylight saving time every year. A 2014 study by the University of Michigan suggested that loss of sleep could be to blame.

Last November, about 60 percent of California voters backed Proposi-

tion 7, paving the way for the California Legislature to make daylight time permanent.

A Washington bill similar to the one that Lively, Nearman, Post and Thatcher are sponsoring passed overwhelmingly in the state's House last week.

British Columbia's premier has suggested that if Oregon, Washington and California make the switch, his province may follow.

Changing to daylight saving time year-round would need congressional approval.

Federal law allows a state to opt out of daylight saving time — Arizona and Hawaii are the only two states that currently do so — but it does not currently permit a state to opt out of standard time in the time zone to which it has been assigned.

The chief sponsors of SB 320 have also proposed that the Legislature petition Congress to allow Oregon and other states to make daylight saving time permanent.

President Donald Trump said this week that he would support year-round daylight saving time throughout the country.

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden supports the idea as well, a spokesman said Tuesday. Oregon's junior senator, Jeff Merkley, is undecided.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has authority to set time zones throughout the country. All but one of Oregon's 36 counties is in the Pacific Time Zone. Malheur County in southeastern Oregon is in the Mountain Time Zone, as is most of Idaho.

Sen. Alan Olsen, R-Canby, a member of the Senate committee, noted that moving to daylight saving time year-round would effectively shift most of Oregon to Mountain Time, one hour ahead of Pacific Time. Malheur County would be moved an hour ahead of Mountain Time.

One person who wrote to the committee about SB 320 suggested that the bill should address Malheur County specifically.

"It has one obvious flaw — ensuring that the people of Malheur County get to have a say regarding their unique situation," Nick Christensen wrote. "But overall, Oregonians will be better-served by never changing their clocks, and having later sunsets in the winter months."

Facility: May open for residents this summer

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there will serve as performance space or to display movies from a digital projector. And the church steeple is coming down.

"I want it to be a facility, not a church," Wilson said.

The biggest part of the project is the construction of a hall to connect the church to the building. Wilson estimated the overhaul of everything will cost north of \$300,000.

Wilson asked the Pilot Rock City Council at its March 5 meeting to approve a conditional use permit to operate the facility, which would be the only one of its kind in the town of about 1,500. City recorder Teri Bacus said a nearby property owner objected to the care center unless Wilson was willing to make some concessions, such as a fence. They reached an agreement, Bacus said, and the council voted unanimously for the permit.

"We're very excited about it," she said. "We don't have a facility and

we have a lot of seniors."

The endeavor also is adding 12-15 jobs, including kitchen and care staff. Wilson stressed the Eudora Wilson House is going to provide employees with on-site day care.

"I was a single parent," she said. "I know how hard child care was. ... I figured if I offered that, people would come to work."

Her daughter, Taylor Gill, will provide the day care. Her son, Travis Vernon, attends Blue Mountain Community College to become a dietary specialist and will work in the center's kitchen. Her other daughter, Whitney Vernon, is learning the ropes to run the center.

The construction could wrap up as soon as April. Then comes the state inspection. Wilson said she is going through the inches-thick binder to learn 500 pages of regulations the state requires for senior care facilities. Wilson said the goal is to take clients no later than August, but if they keep up the pace and pass the state's inspection, they could open as soon as May or June.

Council: Chamber site to include conference space

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erty was too small for an apartment complex to pencil out.

City planner Clint Spencer told the council he had heard similar things. He also noted that the property was already served with the utilities that would be needed for the project and that the surrounding roads would be equipped to handle the resulting traffic. The entrance to the property would be off Evelyn Avenue, not Highway 395.

City councilors — including Jackie Myers, Roy Barron and Rod Hardin (who chimed in by phone from Washington, D.C., while at the national League of Oregon Cities conference) — voted unanimously to support the change.

"Congratulations to the chamber," Mayor David Drotzmann said. "We look forward to seeing a nice facility there, and workforce development."

On Monday the council also approved a change

to the comprehensive plan and annexation of about 71 acres of property owned by Hermiston School District and the Hermiston Irrigation District.

After a land swap, the school district now owns 19 acres at the corner of Northeast 10th Street and East Theater Lane and the irrigation district owns another 51 acres behind it.

The school district plans to build a new elementary school on the property, as soon as it can get a bond passed to pay for one. Anderson, who also serves as the HSD attorney, said the district swapped parcels with the irrigation district so that it could better route traffic by having access off of two streets instead of one.

The council unanimously approved the joint request to annex both properties into the city, and to change them on the comprehensive plan from future residential to an urban status, clearing the way for a future school.

The council's third unanimous vote for the night was

to award a \$3.3 million contract to Premier Excavation of Pasco for a water project that will include two miles of new pipes, an upgrade of the Alora Heights booster station and a new 1 million-gallon water tower on the corner of East Punkin Center and Northeast 10th Street.

The city has taken out a loan for the project that will be repaid using the \$1 million-per-year payments in lieu of taxes from Lamb Weston for its major expansion project outside Hermiston. The city and Umatilla County will each get \$500,000 per year for the next 15 years, and Umatilla County is giving its first \$2 million in payments to the water project.

Assistant city manager Mark Morgan said the project has several major economic benefits.

In the event of a major power outage, Morgan said, the city currently only has about 18 hours worth of water stored at a time. The new water tank will increase

storage capacity.

Second, the project will provide water (or adequate water pressure) to about 290 "highly developable" acres where the city expects to see new housing development as soon as the project is complete. Morgan said Hermiston has lost out on major new employers in the past because it didn't have enough workers, and a boost in housing will help bring more workers to the area.

"We're adding housing, but the sentiment is that we're not adding housing fast enough," he said.

A conservative estimate of 10 new houses a year spurred by the water project would allow the city to reap about \$13.5 million in additional property taxes over 20 years.

The project will also serve the property where Hermiston School District plans to build an elementary school, saving the district as much as \$2 million in infrastructure development costs that would have otherwise fallen on the district.