

Red wave sweeps Oregon as teachers walk out

By GILLIAN FLACCUS
AND SARAH ZIMMERMAN
Associated Press

PORTLAND — Tens of thousands of teachers across Oregon walked off the job Wednesday to demand more money for schools, holding signs and wearing red shirts that have become synonymous with a nationwide movement pushing lawmakers to better fund education.

Schools around the state, including Oregon’s largest district, Portland Public Schools, planned to close for part or all of the day. Most schools offered day care and free lunch programs.

An estimated 25,000 people massed in a downtown Portland park for a rally before beginning a march through the city. The demonstrators — a mix of teachers, parents and students — wore red to support the “Red for Ed” campaign that’s taken hold nationwide and chanted that slogan.

It was one of many protests statewide that called on lawmakers to expand school funding in Oregon, which has some of the largest class sizes and lowest graduation rates in the United States.

Later in the day, an estimated 1,500 teachers and



Teachers and others rally in Woodburn joining thousands across Oregon who walked off the job on Wednesday to demand more money for schools, holding signs and wearing red shirts that have become synonymous with a nationwide movement pushing lawmakers to better fund education.

their supporters demonstrated at the state Capitol in Salem, Oregon.

Kathy Paxton-Williams, who attended public school in Oregon and has been teaching in Portland for more than 20 years, said she has seen dramatic changes.

“Every year, for the last 21 years, there’s been cuts and cuts and cuts,” she said.

The walkout follows a wave of teacher activism that began in West Virginia in 2018 and was followed by

Oklahoma, Kentucky, Arizona and elsewhere. Teachers in North Carolina and South Carolina rallied at their respective state capitols last week.

Unlike other states, Oregon teachers say they’re not pushing for pay raises. They say they’re walking out to highlight classroom conditions and how years of low funding has affected learning opportunities.

Districts decided whether to close schools, and in

many cases, they will have to make up for the lost time.

Portland Public Schools closed for the full day when more than 500 teachers gave notice that they would participate. The district is adding a day to the end of the year.

The walkout comes as Republicans in the state Senate are blocking a vote on a \$1 billion education tax. All 12 Republicans failed to show up Tuesday and Wednesday, denying



Thousands of teachers and education supporters march in Portland on Wednesday.

the Senate enough members to allow a vote.

A Democratic supermajority was poised to approve \$1 billion in additional annual funding for schools, raised through a half a percent tax on some of Oregon’s wealthiest businesses.

Republicans say the tax plan would raise the prices of consumer goods without fixing the education system. They also said they would not support a funding package that doesn’t address the state’s pension debt, which has soared past \$25 billion.

Republican Sen. Tim Knopp says the party won’t return to the Capitol until Democrats agree to renegotiate the tax plan.

John Larson, president of the Oregon Education Association, said Republicans’ refusal to vote on a funding package is exactly why teachers are protesting.

“It just mystifies me that adults just can’t sit in a room and do what’s right for kids,” he said.

Oregon schools are unusually dependent on state funds after voters moved to change the school funding formula in the 1990s in an effort to limit property taxes. Since then, lawmakers have struggled to find an adequate source of revenue to keep up with rising costs.

Forecast for Pendleton Area

TODAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

MONDAY

PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST

75° 43° 79° 49° 85° 56° 85° 55° 82° 52°

HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST

82° 40° 85° 47° 91° 58° 91° 58° 88° 56°

OREGON FORECAST

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

ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP. HIGH LOW Yesterday 75° 50° Normals 69° 45° Records 91° (1987) 30° (1909)

PRECIPITATION 24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00" Month to date 0.00" Normal month to date 0.29" Year to date 7.76" Last year to date 5.76" Normal year to date 5.40"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP. HIGH LOW Yesterday 77° 54° Normals 71° 44° Records 93° (1987) 28° (2002)

PRECIPITATION 24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00" Month to date 0.00" Normal month to date 0.32" Year to date 3.88" Last year to date 4.55" Normal year to date 4.31"

WINDS (in mph) Today Fri. Boardman NE 8-16 NE 3-6 Pendleton NE 7-14 N 4-8

SUN AND MOON Sunrise today 5:32 a.m. Sunset tonight 8:12 p.m. Moonrise today 9:28 a.m. Moonset today 12:22 a.m.

First Full Last New

May 11 May 18 May 26 June 3

Gov. Inslee signs bills tightening gun rules

By TOM JAMES
Associated Press

SEATTLE — Washington Gov. Jay Inslee signed a group of bills Tuesday tightening rules on guns in some circumstances, part of a national shift toward more narrowly focused gun legislation.

Included in the bills were provisions allowing temporary gun bans on people being released from short-term psychiatric holds and people found incompetent to stand trial, and a prohibition on so-called “ghost guns” that lack serial numbers or are made from plastic and might be invisible to airport scanners.

The new rules also update existing gun-surrender requirements for people under restraining orders, adding a requirement for law enforcement to serve the orders.

Renee Hopkins, head of the Alliance for Gun Responsibility, an advocacy group that worked on the measures, said the bills passed Tuesday, combined with other regulations passed in previous years, make Washington “one of the states with the strongest laws in regards to preventing gun violence.”

Gun policy watchers have said the bills fit into a broader pattern of legislation around the U.S. Instead of adding new restrictions for all gun owners, the measures generally focus on specific risk groups such as domestic abusers, violent felons or people experiencing a psychiatric crisis.

“It’s taking a risk-based approach to it, and really looking at the situations that we know are highest risk,” said Hopkins, referring to Tuesday’s bills as well as previous legislation involving suicide prevention and secure storage requirements.

Advocates in at least 13 states have also successfully pushed extreme risk protection orders, which allow courts or police to remove guns based on perceived risk.

Washington already allows such orders, and one of Tuesday’s bills allows them to be entered against minors, which advocates called an effort to combat school shootings.

By comparison, broader gun control legislation has often struggled to find support in recent years, including in Washington state, where an assault weapons ban and a ban on high capacity magazines failed even though Democrats control both chambers of the state Legislature.

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