

Obscure federal rule may pose financial threat to one of Oregon's largest unions

Change could also hamper ability of home care workers to save for retirement

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Up to 30,000 Oregon workers may no longer automatically support their union as concerted national efforts to trim the political power of unions gain steam.

A change in an obscure federal rule may pose a financial threat to one of Oregon's largest public sector unions, while also crimping the ability of home care workers to save for retirement.

The federal agency overseeing public health care for elderly and low-income people earlier this month moved to ban certain voluntary deductions from federally funded paychecks for home care workers.

The new rule may mean that about 30,000 Oregon workers can't have union dues and retirement savings automatically taken from their paychecks. But Oregon and four other states are



Oregon Capital Bureau Photo/Claire Withycombe
Members of Service Employees International Union rally outside the Oregon Capitol on Monday.

contesting the move.

The rule creates a financial roadblock for one of the most active unions in Oregon politics.

Service Employees International Union Local 503 represents the workers who care for about 20,000 Oregonians. Home care workers help elderly people and people with disabilities with bathing, dressing and other daily activities.

The service is paid for through Medicaid and the new rule says such money can't be diverted out of paychecks to third parties even if a worker is willing.

The change impacts American workers who have only recently organized for better wages and other ben-

efits, the unions representing them say.

Oregon home care workers, considered public employees, have relied on collective bargaining since 2001. Since then, the average home care worker, once not even required to be paid minimum wage, has received a roughly \$12 per hour pay bump, according to SEIU Local 503.

But those workers aren't considered full public employees: they don't receive a public pension, for example.

There are other ways the union could collect dues to pay the costs of collective bargaining, including credit cards and bank drafts, said Ben Morris, a spokesman

for SEIU Local 503.

But he said the rule change is a politically motivated attempt to undercut the union.

"The goal of doing something like this is you're hoping people don't follow through to that new system and that you lose revenue," Morris said.

Dues to SEIU Local 503 are 1.7% of monthly salary plus \$2.75, according to U.S. Department of Labor records. The union collected about \$28 million in dues in 2018, according to the federal reports.

The change could also affect retirement savings for home care workers.

Many have opted in to OregonSaves, a new state program that provides a retirement savings account for people who don't get one at work.

State Treasurer Tobias Read, a Democrat, has criticized the federal rule change for preventing payroll deductions for retirement plans.

"Homecare and personal support workers were one of the key groups who fought for the creation of the program because they have no other retirement option through their employers," Read said in a statement.

OREGON IN BRIEF

Fewer youths have started smoking since Tobacco 21 took effect

PORTLAND (AP) — The Oregon Health Authority announced Tuesday promising short-term outcomes of Senate Bill 754, which raised the age of purchase for tobacco and vaping products in Oregon from 18 to 21 years.

OHA found a significant decrease in youths, ages 13-17 and young adults, ages 18-20, who have started using tobacco since the law took effect Jan. 1, 2018. The evaluation also shows a decrease in young adults' perceived ease of access to tobacco and vaping products.

"Tobacco 21 was enacted to help prevent young people from starting to use tobacco, and it's working," said Dr. Tom Jeanne, deputy state health officer and epidemiologist. "With this and our strong Indoor Clean Air Act, Oregon is a national leader in protecting youth from tobacco use."

In August 2017, Gov. Kate Brown signed Senate Bill 754, making Oregon the fifth state to increase the age to purchase tobacco. To ensure compliance with the law, busi-

nesses that sell tobacco products and inhalant delivery systems such as e-cigarettes must post signs prohibiting sales of these products to persons under the age of 21.

Radar to probe for bodies at ex-Oregon asylum

SALEM (AP) — Oregon will use ground-penetrating radar to search for bodies buried at the former Oregon State Insane Asylum.

The *Statesman Journal* reported Tuesday that the facility, which opened in 1883, once had a cemetery — but all the 1,500 bodies buried there were exhumed in 1913.

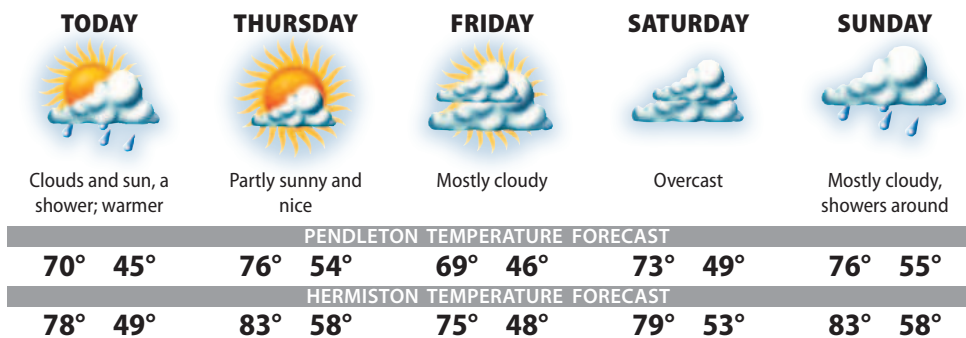
Now the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde is asking the state to make sure that happened before a housing development gets built on the land.

There is no evidence that any remains were left behind, but the tribe wants a full accounting.

The Department of Administrative Services, which owns the land, is hiring a contractor to do the search.

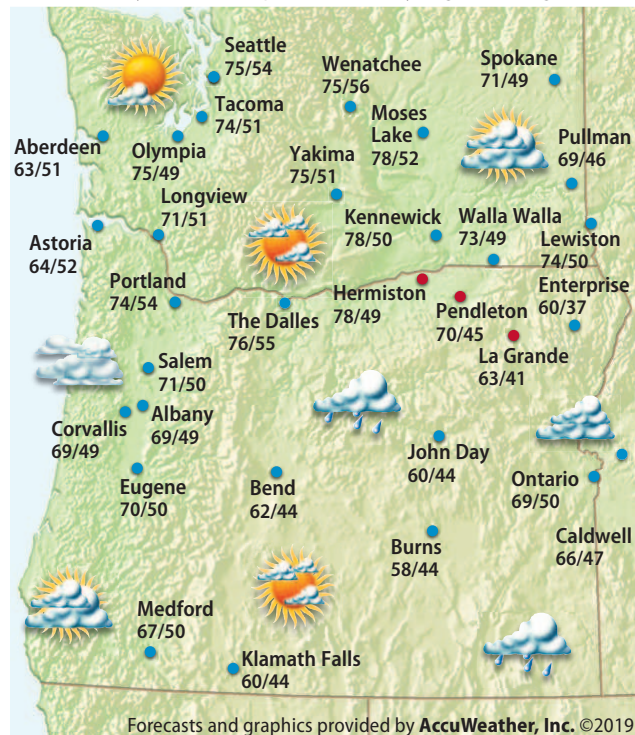
The state will also conduct research about exhumations and cremated remains from the facility.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



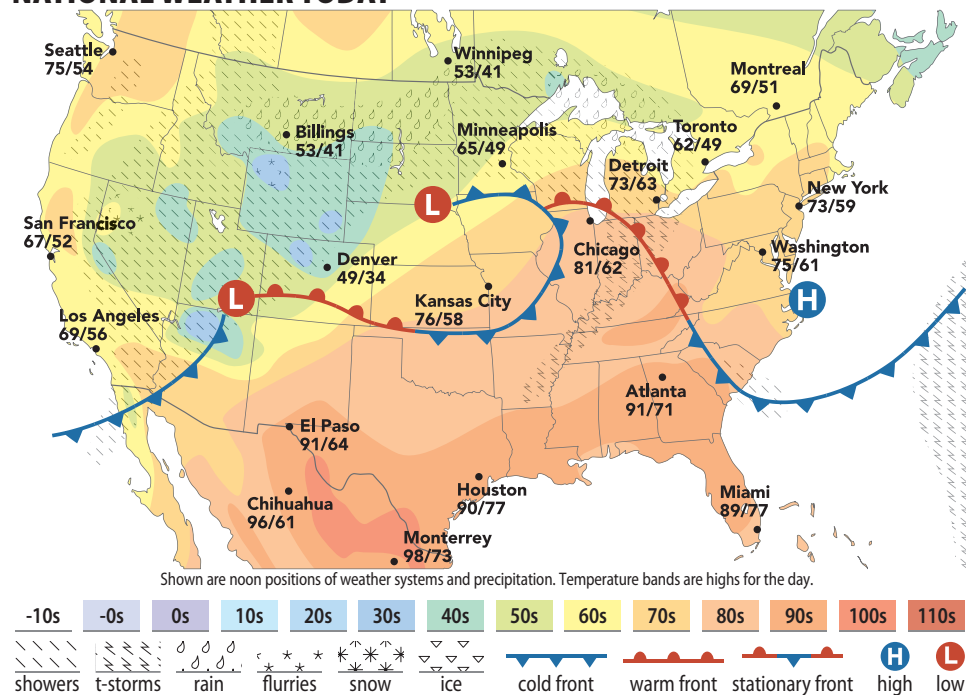
ALMANAC

| PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest. | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------|---------|
| TEMP. | HIGH | LOW | |
| Yesterday | 55° | 47° | |
| Normals | 72° | 48° | |
| Records | 95° (1928) | 30° (1903) | |
| PRECIPITATION | | | |
| 24 hours ending 3 p.m. | 0.45" | | |
| Month to date | 1.34" | | |
| Normal month to date | 0.85" | | |
| Year to date | 9.10" | | |
| Last year to date | 6.07" | | |
| Normal year to date | 5.96" | | |
| HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest. | | | |
| TEMP. | HIGH | LOW | |
| Yesterday | 56° | 50° | |
| Normals | 74° | 48° | |
| Records | 97° (1928) | 32° (1971) | |
| PRECIPITATION | | | |
| 24 hours ending 3 p.m. | 0.15" | | |
| Month to date | 0.44" | | |
| Normal month to date | 0.76" | | |
| Year to date | 4.32" | | |
| Last year to date | 4.96" | | |
| Normal year to date | 4.75" | | |
| WINDS (in mph) | | | |
| Today | NNE 7-14 | | |
| Thu. | NNE 6-12 | | |
| Pendleton | N 6-12 NNW 6-12 | | |
| SUN AND MOON | | | |
| Sunrise today | 5:17 a.m. | | |
| Sunset tonight | 8:27 p.m. | | |
| Moonrise today | none | | |
| Moonset today | 8:28 a.m. | | |
| Last | New | First | Full |
| May 26 | June 3 | June 9 | June 17 |

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 99° in Edinburg, Texas Low 16° in Aspen Springs, Colo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Bills aimed at easing Eastern Oregon development make headway

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**
Capital Press

Two bills easing homebuilding and industrial development outside urban growth boundaries in parts of Eastern Oregon recently won approval in the House.

Ten counties in Eastern Oregon could each slate up to 10 sites totaling 50 acres for "industrial and other employment uses" outside UGBs under Senate Bill

2, which passed the House 53-5 on May 17 after clearing the Senate in February.

Representatives from Eastern Oregon praised the bill for allowing greater land use flexibility in a part of the state that's often lagged behind in economic development.

Before making zoning changes, an economic opportunity analysis would first be completed by the affected counties: Baker, Gilliam, Grant, Har-

ney, Lake, Malheur, Sherman, Union, Wallowa and Wheeler.

Rep. Brian Clem, D-Salem, said the bill will resolve the longstanding question of whether job growth in rural areas is inhibited by Oregon's land use system, which is intended to protect farm and forestland while focusing growth within cities.

"This is about a 40-year-old festering issue that we really need to get an answer to," Clem said.

CORRECTION: Round-Up and Happy Canyon Hall of Fame inductee and longtime Pendleton Round-Up volunteer Dean Forth was not a cast member of the Happy Canyon Night Show. Incorrect information was published in Tuesday's *East Oregonian*. The *EO* regrets the error.

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.

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