

Washington lawmaker spreads views across West

By **NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS**
Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. — A Washington state lawmaker whose actions surrounding an armed standoff with federal agents were dubbed “domestic terrorism” in a recent report has for years been spreading his anti-government views to other western states.

Republican Rep. Matt Shea is a co-founder of the Coalition of Western States, a loose federation of politicians and anti-government and militia supporters throughout the U.S. West. Its goal is to “stop unconstitutional actions against United States citizens,” according to the December report into Shea’s activities, paid for by the Washington state House.

Shea is back serving in the House this session, sitting alone in the back of the chamber since he was kicked out of the Republican caucus.

The report, by a Seattle-based private investigation agency, found Shea helped plan, engaged in or promoted three armed conflicts against the U.S. government in recent years. It called his actions in one — the 2016 standoff at an Oregon wildlife refuge — an “act of domestic terrorism against the United States.”

Despite numerous calls for his resignation, Shea says he won’t go. “I’m still the state representative from the 4th Legislative District in Spokane Valley, Washington, and we are keeping up



Republican Rep. Matt Shea speaks at a gun-rights rally, where many gathered in support of the embattled lawmaker Jan. 17 in Olympia, Wash. Shea was suspended from the Republican caucus in the wake of a December 2019 report that found he was involved in anti-government activities and several lawmakers have called on him to resign, something he says he will not do.

the fight this morning,” Shea, 45, said in a video posted on Facebook on Jan. 6, as the Legislature convened.

Shea rarely speaks to the news media and did not respond to numerous phone calls and emails from The Associated Press.

Critics say Shea has fomented anti-government feelings and acted more like an agitator than a lawmaker.

“Shea is a major connector and influencer for antidemocratic

movements across the West,” said Kate Bitz, a manager of the Portland-based Western States Center, which tracks extremists across the Pacific Northwest.

He often visits other parts of Washington, plus Oregon, Montana and Idaho, to spread his views, Bitz said.

“His legislative role has been reduced to introducing far-right proposals that pander to his allies while having no chance of passing,” she said.

In recent years, Shea has introduced bills to establish a parental notification requirement for girls under 18 who seek abortions; to allow religious objectors to avoid paying union dues; and to allow holders of concealed carry permits to possess pistols in sports stadiums and other public facilities.

Those bills failed, though he did introduce a few that passed, including one directing the state Department of Ecology to report annually on its participation in interagency agreements.

One of Shea’s avenues for spreading his influence is the Coalition of Western States, or COWS, which formed in 2014 as a result of the armed standoff in Nevada between rancher Cliven Bundy and federal law enforcement officers. Shea founded the group with former Nevada Assemblywoman Michele Fiore; former Apache County, Arizona, supervisor Barry Weller; and former Washington state Rep. David Taylor.

The group said in 2015 it had members in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico.

According to the report, others who joined included former Washington state Rep. Graham Hunt and Richard Mack, founder of the Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association. At least one other member currently holds legislative office: Idaho GOP state Rep. Heather Scott. She did not respond to a request for an interview.

Fiore, who is now a Las Vegas city councilwoman, declined to speak to the AP about Shea or COWS.

The Southern Poverty Law Center said it does not classify COWS as an extremist or anti-government group. But it has labeled Shea a “vocal supporter of the anti-public lands extremist movement.”

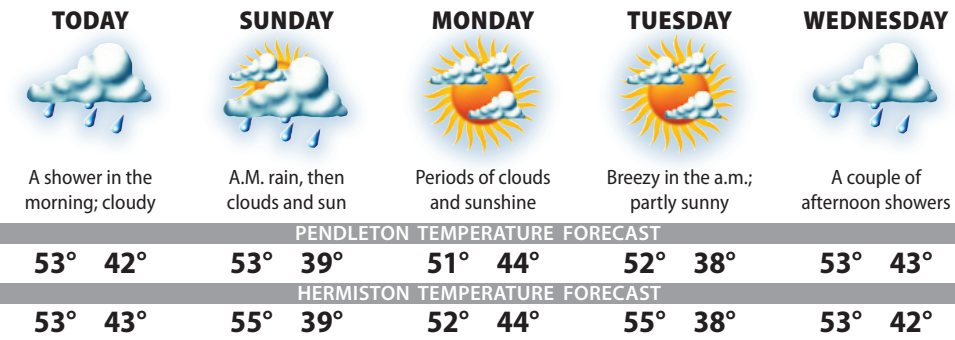
Shea appears often in right-wing media, in the pulpit of conservative evangelical churches, and at gun rights rallies. During those appearances, he often blames an axis of communists, Islamists and environmentalists — along with liberals in general — for many of the nation’s ills.

The Rampart Group report prepared for the Washington Legislature cited Shea’s involvement in the Nevada and Oregon standoffs and another armed conflict in Idaho in 2015.

In the Bundy standoff, Shea posted a plea to Patriot Movement members “that resulted in the April 11, 2014, turnout of approximately 1,500 armed militia members that stood against the U.S. government.” The standoff eventually ended peacefully.

The Priest River, Idaho, conflict occurred as the Department of Veterans Affairs prepared to remove firearms from the home of a military veteran whose name had been added to a national background check system because he had suffered a stroke and was considered not competent to possess firearms.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	57°	44°
Normals	42°	28°
Records	71° (1935)	-15° (1930)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.15"
Month to date	1.46"
Normal month to date	1.14"
Year to date	1.46"
Last year to date	2.07"
Normal year to date	1.14"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	59°	40°
Normals	43°	29°
Records	63° (1935)	-16° (1949)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.01"
Month to date	0.22"
Normal month to date	1.00"
Year to date	0.22"
Last year to date	1.53"
Normal year to date	1.00"

WINDS (in mph)

	Today	Sun.
Boardman	SW 3-6	WSW 7-14
Pendleton	S 6-12	WSW 8-16

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	7:25 a.m.
Sunset tonight	4:50 p.m.
Moonrise today	8:13 a.m.
Moonset today	5:45 p.m.

First Full Last New

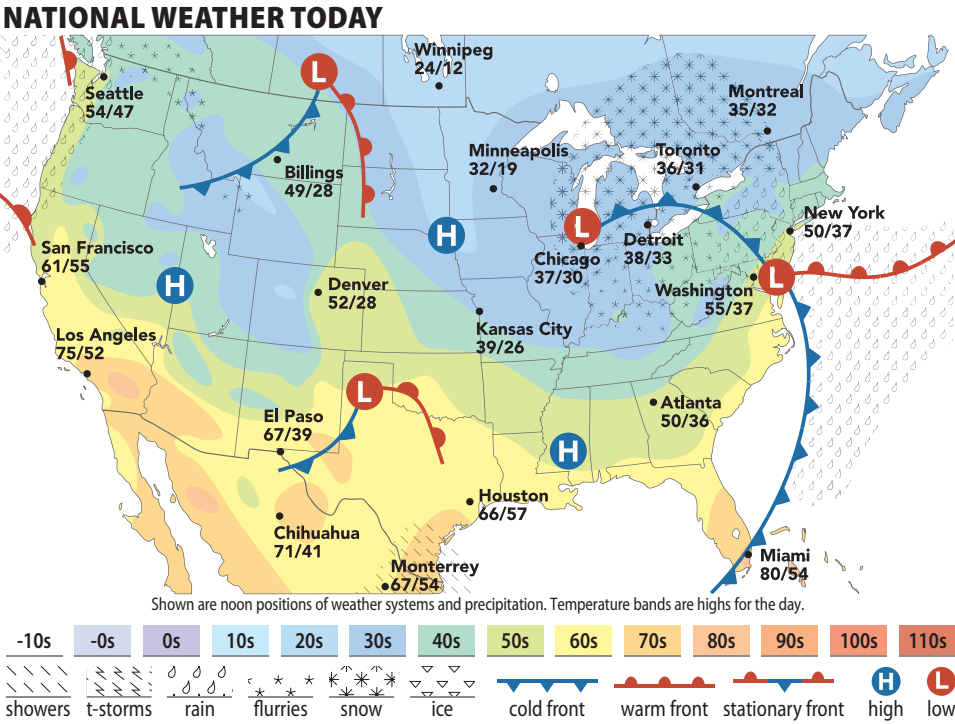
Feb 1

Feb 8

Feb 15

Feb 23

NATIONAL EXTREMES
Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 82° in Naples, Fla. Low -9° in Crested Butte, Colo.



Brown urges action on climate change

Governor says issue is top priority for upcoming session

By **KYLE SPURR**
EO Media Group

BEND — Crafting climate change policy in the wake of a landmark bill that failed last year is a top priority during the upcoming short legislative session for Oregon Gov. Kate Brown, she told a forum in Bend on Thursday.

“We must do something meaningful and soon about climate change,” Brown told the audience. “This is the issue of our time.”

The forum, hosted by the City Club of Central Oregon and held in the Riverhouse

on the Deschutes convention center, was full of City Club members, elected officials and business leaders.

Since the climate change legislation collapsed last year, Brown met with people on all sides of the debate to refine future policies, she said.

“I am committed to crafting climate policy that protects our environment and also grows our economy,” Brown said. “In Oregon, I know we can do both.”

Specifically, the new proposed climate policy would not create unfair disparities in rural communities, Brown said.

The proposed plan to cap carbon emissions would start in Portland, and other large populated cities,

before affecting rural areas. It would be rolled out similarly to how minimum wage is increased across the state, Brown said.

“Under this plan, or a similar version, the majority of truly rural communities will be exempted from price increases at the pump,” Brown said.

Brown took several questions from the audience about health care, wildfire response and affordable housing.

Kellen Sears, 10, a fifth-grader at Juniper Elementary School in Bend, asked Brown how she plans to accomplish so many things in such a short legislative session. The 2020 session begins Feb. 3 and will last 35 days.

Idaho institution for Oregon foster children off limits

PORTLAND — A Lane County judge has blocked Oregon child welfare officials from sending a foster child to live at an Idaho facility after the boy’s attorney pointed out a technicality that could impact the state’s ability to place more foster children at the location.

The Department of Human Services sends more foster children to live at Mountain Home Academy in Southern Idaho than any other facility outside Oregon, *The Oregonian*/OregonLive reported.

A 1975 law says facilities that take in Oregon foster children must be incorporated. Mountain Home is a limited liability company, a type of business that is not incorporated.

The law was adopted before limited liability companies existed, and it has never been updated.

The judge earlier this month refused to send the boy to Mountain Home because of the incorporation requirement, several people who attended the Jan. 8 hearing in Eugene confirmed to the newspaper.

Washington lawmakers seek to protect lemonade stands

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Local governments would be prohibited from interfering with kids who want to set up lemonade stands under bills being considered in the Washington House and Senate.

Republican state Rep. Luanne Van Werven, sponsor of the House bill, said one of her constituents brought the issue of lemonade stand regulations to her attention.

The Northwest News Network reports her measure, which received a public hearing Tuesday, would block local governments from regulating the occasional sale of non-alcoholic beverages, like lemonade, by anyone under 18 as long as the stand is on private property.

Under current law, kid-run lemonade stands are subject to state and local regulations, including a requirement that the sellers have a permit. There are also sales tax requirements, but the Washington Department of Revenue said they don’t enforce that.

A similar bill sponsored by Republican state Sen. Steve O’Ban would exempt kid lemonade stands from sales tax.

CLARIFICATION: In the Page A1 story, “Council pushes back Edwards Apartments decision,” published Thursday, Jan. 23, the story used the wrong terminology when referring to Edwards Apartments’ closure in 2011. The city deemed the apartment complex unfit for occupation and forced its closure.

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
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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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