



J. Scott Applewhite/Associated Press

Police with guns drawn watch as protesters try to break into the House Chamber at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021, in Washington.

Under siege: Vice President Pence evacuated

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prayed while protesters banged on the doors. Democratic Rep. Dean Phillips yelled loudly at Republicans, “This is because of you!”

A chaplain prayed as police guarded the doors to the chamber and lawmakers tried to gather information about what was happening.

Announcements blared: Due to an “external security threat,” no one could enter or exit the Capitol complex, the recording said. Lawmakers tweeted that they were sheltering in place.

Reporters and lawmakers hid under tables as the protesters banged on the door, demanding to be let inside. Rumors of guns spread, but it wasn’t clear if any shots were fired beside the one. Tear gas was said to have been dispersed in the Rotunda.

After making sure the hallways were clear, police swiftly escorted people down a series of hallways and tunnels to a cafeteria in one of the House office buildings.

As he walked out of the Capitol, Connecticut Rep. Jim Himes said he “always assumed it could never happen here.”

But others were not so sure.

Rep. Mike Kelly of Pennsylvania, among those challenging Biden’s win, blamed “both sides” for the chaos at the Capitol.

“What do you think was taking place in this country?” he told reporters. “There’s been a lot of people during the last four years that have just been getting more and more incensed over what is going on around the country, on both sides. It’s just too bad. This is not how we handle things in America.”

The Senate side was not much different.

Vice President Mike

OREGON DELEGATION STUNNED BY PRO-TRUMP PROTESTERS

WASHINGTON — As the U.S. Congress began certifying the win of President-elect Joe Biden on Wednesday, Jan. 6, protesters breached the U.S. Capitol building, leading to an evacuation.

U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici spoke to the Portland Tribune at 11:50 a.m. Pacific Standard Time and said she and her staff were safe and out of the building.

“I’m OK,” she said. “But it’s just awful. I’m concerned for the safety of everyone.”

The Washington Post and other media reported that throngs of protesters — at the encouragement of President Donald Trump — stormed the Capitol to protest the process for certifying Biden’s win.

“Just before 1 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time), a group of primarily white men pushed, then toppled the barricades, storming through them to the grassy fields leading to the Capitol,” according to the Washington Post. “Hundreds scaled and kicked aside the barricades, yelling ‘Forward!’”

As the Democrat spoke to the Portland Tribune, D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser used an emergency broadcast system to announce a citywide curfew.

“The last four years, tempers have flared,” Bonamici said. “Donald Trump has brought this about by urging people to come here, based on false statements.”

She continued speaking but said, “I’m sorry. I have to.” And was abruptly cut off. U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, a Democrat, spoke to reporters via conference call around 12:34 p.m. (PST) on Jan. 6, saying “We are safe. Senators were rushed to an undisclosed, safe location. We’re safe and they’re reestablishing control of the Capitol.”

He added that his employees are no longer in the Capitol.

“As far as I’m aware, my whole staff is safe. I didn’t have much staff here because of COVID,” he said. “But they’re all safe,

thank you.”

Merkley spoke with anger about the lies regarding the November election, which drove protesters to the Capitol.

“That’s what we heard on the floor today,” he said. “We should listen to the mob. And that’s why we should stop the election of Joe Biden. That’s exactly wrong.”

Nick Clemens, spokesman for Republican Rep. Cliff Bentz, said that the congressman and all his staff in Washington were safe and awaiting word on next steps. Clemens declined to discuss Bentz’s position on the objections to the Electoral College vote.

Bentz posted a statement to his Facebook page.

“Peaceful protest is essential to our society — violent protest is not,” he wrote. “I urge all those gathered in Washington DC today to respect United States Capitol Police and allow Congress to resume deliberation in the electoral certification process.”

Democrat Rep. Earl Blumenauer called the protesters “domestic terrorists.”

“The people storming the U.S. Capitol building right now are domestic terrorists emboldened by Trump and every Republican who has spread lies about the results of the presidential election,” he said. This has to stop.”

Sen. Ron Wyden also issued a statement saying the protest is a fitting end to four years of the Trump presidency.

“What’s happening today in our nation’s Capitol is a direct assault on democracy, a riot by insurrectionists that caps off four years of Donald Trump fanning the flames of fanaticism,” he said. “Every Republican lawmaker who supported his efforts to overturn a legitimate election shares responsibility for the violence at the heart of our democracy.”

— Gary A. Warner, Oregon Capital Bureau, and Pamplin Media Group

Pence, who was presiding over the session, was evacuated from the Senate as protesters and police shouted outside the doors.

Police evacuated the chamber at 11:30 a.m. Pacific Time, ushering sen-

ators to the first of what would be several undisclosed locations.

Clerks grabbed boxes of electoral college certificates as they left.

Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, attend-

ing the session, was among those ushered to safety.

As soon as they left, protesters roamed the halls shouting, “Where are they?” One got on the Senate dais and yelled, “Trump won that election.”

Vaccine: Umatilla County received 2,400 doses last week

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been asking the state for a firmer plan to get the vaccine into local arms.

It’s work that should have been happening weeks ago, said county public health director Joseph Fiumara, pointing out his department began preparing this past summer for a vaccine rollout.

Thanks to those months of preplanning, officials have crafted a road map to getting the county of 78,000 people immunized against the virus — those who want the vaccine, that is, and not including children.

But there has not been a verified timeline on how that’s going to happen, public health officer Dr. Jonathan Hitzman said on Jan. 4.

In the first transfer of vaccine from Oregon officials last week, Umatilla County received 2,400 doses: St. Anthony Hospital in Pendleton and Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston both got an initial shipment of 700, while the public health department was given 200.

Good Shepherd then got another 800 doses, Hitzman said.

But, like in every other Oregon county, there’s no telling what — or if — vaccines will show up each week, Fiumara said.

Fiumara, Hitzman and deputy health director Alissha Lundgren apprised Umatilla County commissioners of the situation on Jan. 4.

It could be 100 doses or 1,000 doses to next land, Fiumara said.

“We have to see how much we get, then hurry up and plan for that number,” Lundgren told commissioners in a Jan. 4 morning staff meeting.

Moderna’s vaccine can be kept refrigerated for up to 30 days and is stable at room temperature for 12 hours, experts say.

The county’s logistical challenges with vaccinating the public are the same around the country at this moment, Hitzman explained later.

“I’m not sure there’s anyone or any group to blame, I think there are issues from the federal government to the states to local health departments. At the end of the day, it’s like all the clichés about government inefficiencies come to bear.”

The reality is, pandemic or no, government agencies are big and bureaucratic, not designed to be fast and nimble, Hitzman said.

“Until the federal doses arrive, the state doesn’t know how it will get administered. It’s a ‘Don’t shoot until you see the whites of their eyes’ situation.”

And with the surprising speed at which the vaccine was developed and produced, it caught governments even less prepared for a coordinated deployment of the shots, he added.

“The quote I’ve heard is that out of 12 million vaccines produced, only 3 million have gone into the arms of Americans.”

Fiumara said his department is obligated to dispense the vaccine as laid out by Oregon Health Authority, which is following federal guidelines.

“There are lots of variables and it’s dependent on so many things.”

There’s good news sprinkled throughout the scene, however, he and Hitzman said. They noted that the first doses to arrive were distributed to front-line health workers. And more manufacturers are racing to get their own version to market.

As well, mutual aid partnerships are springing up around the vaccination efforts. Pharmacies like Walgreens have contracted to inoculate residents of some long-term care facilities, Hitzman said, although he worries about disabled people who are cared for at home and might not learn of vaccination events.

Oregon Health & Science University in Portland has chipped in by loaning the health department an ultra-cold freezer required for the Pfizer vaccine formula.

While the county is now receiving the Moderna vaccine that only needs standard frozen storage, Fiumara said he wants to be well positioned if anything goes wrong in the Moderna production and only the Pfizer formula is available.

Health officials everywhere are also tasked with planning for the second vaccine doses needed to reach the highest possible immunity.

Hitzman is encouraging people to remember that the testing for COVID-19 started out spotty and rough, and expanded dramatically to fit the need.

“And the same thing will happen with the shot. But there will be unforeseen obstacles that get in the way.”

Still, he continued, “realistically I think the vast majority of adults who want to be vaccinated will be so before next Christmas. I’m hopeful it will be faster, but to have unrealistic expectations is to set yourself up to be disappointed.”

The world will get through this pandemic, he added.

“We’re going to win this battle and we will be in a much better place.”

Commissioner: Dorrان claims ‘disenfranchisement’

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represents every citizen in Umatilla County, not just their neighbors. Regardless of where the board chair lives, they should be paying attention to all parts of the county.”

Dorrان made repeated references at the meeting to the lack of leadership coming from the west part of the county. He said that no commissioner from the west part of the county had been elected in six years.

Dorrان said that most board chair members have hailed from the east in places like Pendleton — even though Shafer was elected to county commissioner while living in Athena.

“Although I have noticed specific regional disenfranchisement,” Dorrان said, “the manipulation of officer rotation directly affects all of the county, and once again it causes a division

of the populace that many of us have tried to cure for many years.”

Murdock said that Dorrان’s effort only furthered

find it offensive.”

Shafer and Murdock each say that historically, freshman commissioners have not held board

“I HAVE ALL THE RESPECT FOR BOTH THE COMMISSIONERS. OBVIOUSLY THIS ISN’T GOING TO BE THE LAST TIME WE DISAGREE, BY ANY MEANS.”

— Dan Dorrان, Umatilla County commissioner

division. He added that upon his election, in 2013, there had in fact been few commissioners who hailed from Pendleton.

“It concerns me that it’s been suggested that because two of us are now living in Pendleton we have somehow dispossessed the remainder of the county,” Murdock said in the meeting. “I find this both divisive and I also

chair positions due to the immense responsibility that the position entails. They said that nowhere in the charter is there a reference to geographical representation, and that county commissioners should work on behalf of all county residents, rather than those from the communities where they reside.

In his response, Mur-

dock highlighted a variety of efforts that leaders in the east portion of the county have made to help those in the west.

In the meeting, Dorrان referenced the fact that commissioner Shafer had been appointed to the position of vice chair in his freshman year as commissioner. However, Murdock and Shafer responded that the only reason Shafer took his position was because commissioner Bill Elfering, who was board chair at the time, stepped down from his position due to medical issues.

Shafer and Murdock added that although they may disagree, they are confident the commissioners will continue to have a good working relationship.

“I have all the respect for both the commissioners,” Dorrان said. “Obviously, this isn’t going to be the last time we disagree, by any means.”

Reopening:

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ing a community that depends on the restaurant industry that is more than a meal — it is Umatilla County’s social lifeline.”

Dorrان and the group concluded with two points.

They requested the state fund a temporary position called an “open/stay open liaison agent.” In an interview, Dorrان said the group envisioned this position as educating various restaurant owners on how to comply with state rules so that they can operate within them, although it wouldn’t have enforcement capabilities.

The other point the group wanted to make was about ventilation. While the state has closed indoor dining out of a concern that the virus could spread in an insufficiently ventilated room, Dorrان said air is circulated more frequently in Eastern Ore-

gon because of the region’s variable temperatures.

In the interview, Dorrان said the request would cost the state \$30,000, money that would include the cost of a temporary employee and material costs like pamphlet printing. While a cost breakdown wasn’t included in the letter, Dorrان said the group would be pleased if the governor’s office asked them for more details because it would mean the governor took their letter seriously.

Gov. Kate Brown closed dine-in restaurants across the state as COVID-19 saw a surge in new cases. Umatilla County is no exception, as a recent spike boosts the county toward the precipice of 6,000 total cases.

But Dorrان said the stakes aren’t just about restaurants, but about keeping their communities from turning toward bitterness.

“If all everyone turns to is defeatism, where do we go?” he said.