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Senate OKs bill banning guns in Capitol, state buildings

Bill also would raise initial CHL fees

By PETER WONG
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — All firearms would be barred from state buildings, and local governments would have the option of barring them from their own buildings, under a bill that is halfway through the Oregon Legislature.

The Senate voted 16-7 on Thursday, March 25, for Senate Bill 554. It goes to the House after a debate lasting more than three hours and reflecting the national arguments about gun regulation.

Majority Democrats defeated a Republican-proposed substitute that would have affirmed the constitutional right to bear arms and required a study of gun-free zones. They also rejected seven other Republican motions that would have delayed or killed the bill.

The bill would bar about 300,000 holders of concealed handgun licenses from bringing their firearms into state buildings, including the Oregon Capitol. Some places, such as state courts, already are off-limits.

Cities, counties, schools and other local governments would have the option under the bill to bar firearms from their buildings, although adjacent garages and parking lots are excluded. A ban also can apply to airport terminals; the federal Transportation Security Administration

oversees boarding areas and the shipment of firearms in stored luggage.

Violations would be considered a Class C felony, maximum penalties for which are a \$125,000 fine and five years in prison, although unlikely to be levied on a first offense.

The bill also would raise initial fees for concealed handgun licenses from \$50 to \$100, and renewals from \$50 to \$75.

The debate got so heated that Senate President Peter Courtney — who apologized earlier for a comment

about “crushing opponents” that referred to Oregon opponents in the NCAA basketball tournaments — said, “People are getting angry about this measure from all sides.”

But it was clear that Democrats had the votes to prevail, rejecting Republican motions to send the bill to various committees.

The Senate Judiciary Committee spent four hours Feb. 22 listening to testimony, much of it from gun rights

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UMATILLA COUNTY

County to receive \$15M in stimulus

Commissioners say plans have yet to be made for how funds will be used

By BRYCE DOLE
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Umatilla County government will be receiving \$15.12 million from the most recent federal stimulus bill in response to the economic impact brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, Umatilla County cities in total will be receiving approximately \$11.36 million, according to a database provided to the EO Media Group. Funding will be distributed to each city by population, with the largest amounts going to Hermiston, \$3.62 million, and Pendleton, \$3.42 million.

Umatilla County commissioners said that plans have yet to be made for how the funds will be used on the county level. The first half of the funds are expected to reach the county in May, with the remaining half coming about a year later, the commissioners said.

“I was kind of blown away when I first saw how much we would be getting as a county,” Umatilla County Commissioner John Shafer said. “We can do a lot with that kind of money. We can make a lot of positive changes.”

The Umatilla County commissioners said that discussions about

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‘Game changer’

New state rules on social distancing requirements has schools anxious to move forward

By ANTONIO SIERRA and
JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

UMATILLA COUNTY — Going into the Oregon Department of Education’s latest update on its COVID-19 rules, InterMountain Education Service District Superintendent Mark Mulvihill said Eastern Oregon administrators were looking for two things — reducing the social distancing requirement from 6 feet to 3 feet and removal of the cohort limit.



Mulvihill

When the state made its announcement on Monday, March 22, they got both.

“It’s very exciting news,” Mulvihill said. “It’s a game changer.”

The day after the state changed the rules, Hermiston School District sent out an announcement of its own — all students would resume full-time learning five days a week starting April 13.



Students in Lucas Eivins social studies class sit socially distanced during class at Sandstone Middle School in Hermiston on Thursday, March 26, 2021.

Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Superintendent Tricia Mooney said the 6-foot requirement had been the thing holding the district back from offering full-time school sooner. Once 6 feet was merely recommended, but only 3 feet was required, the district was anxious to move forward.

“We might have to look at how we use some spaces differently, but we’re excited to have everyone back,” she said.

Building administrators are working out plans for their buildings now. Six feet of space will still be required in some situations, such as while students take their masks off to eat lunch, so Mooney said students will be spread out in smaller groups in common areas and outdoor spaces to make lunchtime work. Students who don’t bring lunch from home will be given a sack lunch to take to their

designated area, and breakfast for the next morning will be sent home with students rather than eaten in the classroom.

Mooney said another key change in the Ready Schools, Safe Learners guidance, updated March 15, changed rules for “cohorts” designed to limit the spread of outbreaks by limiting the number

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Brothers accused of storming U.S. Capitol remain in custody

Klein brothers appeared separately in federal court on Friday, March 26

By MAXINE BERNSTEIN
The Oregonian/OregonLive

PORTLAND — Oregon brothers Matthew Leland Klein and Jonathanpeter Allen Klein, who are accused of storming the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, were ordered Friday, March 26, to be held in custody pending trial on six felony charges.

The two appeared separately from Portland before U.S. Magistrate Judge Zia M. Faruqi in the District of Columbia federal court via Zoom video conference.

Matthew Klein, 24, and Jonathanpeter Klein, 21, are expected to



Federal Bureau of Investigations/Contributed Photo

Jonathanpeter Allen Klein, 21, on right, a self-described Proud Boy, with brother Matthew Leland Klein, 24, on left, according to the FBI.

remain in custody in Portland at least until their next video-feed hearing on Thursday, April 1, before a federal district judge in Washington, D.C.

That also will allow Matthew Klein to resolve pending gun possession charges in Multnomah County. The brothers are being held at the Mult-

nomah County Detention Center.

The federal magistrate judge cited a ruling out March 26 from a panel of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia that stemmed from a challenge of detention by a 31-year-old Tennessee man and his 57-year-old mother from Georgia, who were charged in the Jan. 6 riot.

The appeals panel specifically wrote that in its view “those who actually assaulted police officers and broke through windows, doors, and barricades and those who aided, conspired with, planned or coordinated such actions, are in a different category of dangerousness than those who cheered on the violence or entered the Capitol after others cleared the way.”

In the cases against the Klein brothers, prosecutors allege they

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