

Oregon Senate vote sends gun legislation to Gov. Brown

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SALEM — Gov. Kate Brown is the final stop for the Oregon Legislature's major gun legislation of 2021.

The Senate voted on Wednesday, May 5, to accept the House version of a bill that combines requirements for locks and safe storage of firearms with a narrowed ban on concealed-handgun license holders bringing firearms into some public places, notably the Oregon Capitol and Portland International Airport.

The vote was 17-7. Sen. Betsy Johnson of Scappoose was the lone Democrat to join six Republicans in opposition to the revised Senate Bill 554. Five Republicans and one independent were recorded as excused or absent.

Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athens, did not speak during floor debate, but said afterward he agreed with the sentiments expressed by the others who voted against the bill.

Sen. Floyd Prozanski, a Democrat from Eugene and chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said the bill follows the principles laid out by a 2008 U.S. Supreme Court decision. The court for the first time concluded there was an individual right to bear arms under the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, but that right can be regulated.

"What we do know is that reasonable regulations can



Pamplin Media Group, File/Oregon Capital Insider

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be placed on these individual rights we have," Prozanski said. "The bottom line is that we have a bill that does in fact address certain areas that we feel as a state need to be regulated."

Oregon would join 11 other states with some form of requirements for locks and safe storage of firearms, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

As for the narrower scope of the ban on guns in some public places, Prozanski said it was a compromise.

The original Senate version would have left it to all local

governments to decide restrictions for themselves; the final version limits the option to school districts, community colleges and state universities. The option for cities, counties and special districts was removed.

The ban still applies to the Capitol in Salem and the passenger terminal at Portland International Airport.

As a state representative in 1995, Prozanski voted for a law that preempts local governments from regulating firearms, other than discharging them in public.

"But I will tell you that

even though I thought it was the best decision I could make at that time, today is a different day," he said.

State of Safety Action, a nonprofit that advocates prevention of gun violence, issued a statement of support after the vote.

"Safe storage saves lives, helping prevent unintentional shootings and firearm suicides," Henry Wessinger, the group's president, said. "It will make it harder for potential school shooters to obtain a gun, and it will support responsible gun ownership." Senate Republican Leader

Fred Girod of Lyons took issue not only with the restrictions, but also the process that allowed the House to merge its safe-storage bill with the original Senate version, which dealt with firearms in public places.

"This is an example of how bad this building can get," he said. "We were locked out of the process in this bill."

But like his counterpart in the House, Republican Leader Christine Drazan of Canby, Girod also took issue with the way some gun rights advocates lobbied in opposition to it. The Senate's March 25 vote on the original version prompted threats against some Republican senators, and a recall effort aimed at Girod, because they did not walk out to call a halt to Senate business.

"There is a fringe group out there that is sure not welcome in my office," Girod said. "It is not OK to threaten people's lives, their staff. It's not an appropriate way to lobby."

Key provisions of the revised SB 554:

- Guns must have trigger or cable locks, be stored in a locked container or in a gun room. An offense is a Class C violation, which carries a maximum fine of \$500, unless someone under age 18 obtains access, in which case it is a Class A violation with a maximum fine of \$2,000. No jail time is imposed for violations.

- Stolen firearms must be reported to police, generally within 72 hours.

- Initial filing fees for concealed-handgun licenses are increased from \$50 to \$100, and for renewals, from \$50 to \$75.

- The Capitol and the Portland airport passenger terminal are off-limits to all firearms, including those borne by holders of concealed-handgun licenses, except for law enforcement. (The bill specifies airport terminals with annual passenger counts of 1 million; Eugene and Medford were at those thresholds in 2019 prior to the coronavirus pandemic. Sponsors say that the ban applies only to Portland.)

Violations are considered Class A misdemeanors with maximum punishments of one year in jail and a fine of \$6,250.

- Firearms bans for license holders are optional at the discretion of the governing boards of Oregon's 197 school districts, 17 community colleges, seven state universities and Oregon Health & Science University. Notices must be posted online, and at entrances to buildings and grounds.

- The final version removes optional bans by cities, counties and special districts. Firearms bans already apply to state courts, which often are in buildings maintained by counties.

Dream: Last game of the season is May 25

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right direction, while the next hit a line drive past third base and jogged quickly straight to first. All players run one base at a time, until the last batter brings everyone home.

Outfielders send the ball back to the pitcher instead of to a base, and several outfielders also toss a few extra softballs back and forth while they wait their turn to bat.

No matter what happens, players, coaches and parents in the stand erupt into cheers.

Smalley, whose daughter plays on the Dream Team, said she appreciates the opportunity to create something that works for a lot of different age groups and abilities to join.

"It's nice to do something that's activity based, that doesn't rely on verbal skills," she said.

Smalley also said she often hears from parents of the "neurotypical" Little League athletes that it was their child's favorite game of the season.

Bleyenbergh said Little League has always been great about getting them whatever equipment they need. When she first got involved in the program, started about a decade ago by John Guillen, she assumed it was a standard part of Little League. But she has since learned that most kids don't get that opportunity.

Lexi Sinor and Avery Devin, both 11, were two of the Marlins helping Dream Team athletes field balls and run bases on May 4. Avery said she liked helping out with the game and was glad she did it, while Lexi said it was her first time playing in the game, but she had a lot of fun helping other people get to play softball like she does. "I like helping kids that don't always have the same advantages," she said.

After the two-inning game is over and each Dream Team player has gotten to bat twice, players do some cheers before lining up for a squirt of



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

The Dream Team's Nathaniel Shasteen, accompanied by a pair of Cardinals players, runs toward second base at Hermiston's Field of Dreams on Tuesday, May 4, 2021.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

The Dream Team's Rian Middleton hits the ball during a game at Hermiston's Field of Dreams on Tuesday, May 4, 2021.

hand sanitizer and a snack.

Rian Middleton grabbed a treat bag and juice box before lining up for a squirt of

signature high fives. He said his favorite part is getting to hit the ball. It's also the hardest part, he said.

The final game of the season is May 25, and Smalley said it will end with a pizza party.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

The Oregon East Symphony performs a virtual concert at the Vert Auditorium in Pendleton on Oct. 24, 2020. The Vert Auditorium is among city facilities slated for improvements.

Budget: 'We're going to create a summer road map to make Pendleton a tourist destination'

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ated with the city's buildings, and as recently as 2014, facility maintenance was a part of a city bond proposal. With the federal stimulus coming in over the next two years, Corbett is again trying to put some dollars toward facilities.

Included with the budget is a laundry list of repairs and improvements that could be made with the extra \$3.4 million: new heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems at the Vert Auditorium and the McCune Recreation Center, paying off debt the Pendleton Convention Center accumulated to pay for a new roof, and new cameras and paving on the Pendleton River Parkway are just a few of the projects being proposed.

The Vert is receiving a significant amount of attention from the city, with the complex slated to receive more than \$500,000 dollars in repairs to cover painting, sound system installation and chair and carpet repair costs.

Despite all the investment, Corbett noted at a Tuesday, May 4, budget meeting that the Vert rented out its space sparingly throughout the year.

"It's a facility that's near and dear to the community that doesn't make any money," he said.

Corbett said he had assigned Pendleton Convention Center Manager Pat Beard to work

on increasing activity at the venerable venue.

Beard, along with Economic Development Director Steve Chrisman, is a part of a group of tourism interests that is trying to get startup funding from the stimulus for a new tourism initiative — Pendleton Comes Alive. Under the proposal, the group would spend the money on creating new tours and bars around town in addition to installing people dressed in Western garb in the downtown area to interact with tourists.

"We're going to create a summer road map to make Pendleton a tourist destination," Corbett said at the meeting.

Corbett clarified that the group was initially asking for \$250,000 a year for two years, but after identifying some areas where they could save money, they agreed to a \$400,000 offer.

While the American Rescue Plan is providing Pendleton's facilities a shot in the arm, it isn't meant to be a sustainable source of revenue. Corbett said he's discussed the issue with the city's department heads, including the idea of using money that's been unused at the end of the fiscal year and funneling it to a building maintenance fund.

The budget committee will hold several more meetings to finish reviewing the budget. The Pendleton City Council is expected to adopt the 2021-22 budget on June 1.

Pool:

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stay below the extreme level this summer, operations at the pool will look different than they have in past years.

Hughes said the city expects to hire slightly more pool staff to cover new sanitation standards, and all pool

staff must wear masks unless in the water. The same rule applies to guests, who will also be required to socially distance when waiting in line for concessions or the water slide.

Among the aquatic center's other facilities, the lockers in the locker rooms have been removed and renting the shelters is prohibited until the county falls below

the high risk level.

Hughes said the pool should be a relatively safe environment during the pandemic because of the risk of spreading the virus is lower outdoors and all of the chemical treatments staff use to clean the pool should keep the area sanitary.

While the number of people allowed will fall well below the aquatic center's

true 8,500-person capacity, Hughes said parks and recreation is hoping to offset some of the potential losses by offering a more expansive array of swimming classes.

As with anything related to COVID-19, Hughes cautioned that the city's aquatic center plans were subject to change based on any revisions to the state's guidance.