

GOP lawmaker expelled over state Capitol breach

By ANDREW SELSKY
The Associated Press

SALEM — Republican lawmakers voted with majority Democrats in the Oregon House of Representatives to take the historic step of expelling a Republican member who let violent, far-right protesters into the state Capitol on Dec. 21.



Nearman

Legislators said on the House floor this could be the most important vote they ever cast. They then proceeded Thursday, June 10, to expel an unapologetic Rep. Mike Nearman with a 59-1 vote, marking the first time a member has been expelled by the House in its 160-year history. The only vote against the resolution for expulsion was Nearman's own.

Rep. Paul Holvey, a Democrat who chaired a committee that earlier unanimously recommended Nearman's expulsion, reminded lawmakers of the events of Dec. 21, which were an eerie foreshadowing of the much more serious Jan. 6 assault on the U.S. Capitol.

"On the morning of Dec. 21st, a couple hundred protesters — some of them heavily armed and wearing

body armor — arrived at the Capitol for a protest, with the intent to illegally enter the building and interrupt the proceedings of the Oregon Legislature," Holvey said. "Staff and legislators were terrified. We can only speculate what would have happened if they were able to get all the way in."

Nearman said he let the protesters in because he believes the Capitol, which has been closed to the public to protect against spread of the coronavirus, should have been open. The assault happened during a peak of the pandemic.

But even Republicans, who are often bitterly opposed to Democratic initiatives on climate change and some other bills, said the crowd outside the Capitol that day was not made up of constituents who wanted to peacefully engage in the democratic process.

Some were carrying guns. Some shouted false QAnon conspiracy theories about Democrats kidnapping babies. They carried American flags, banners for former President Donald Trump and a sign calling for the arrest of Democratic Gov. Kate Brown. They broke windows



Andrew Selsky/The Associated Press

The Oregon House of Representatives gets set to open a session on the evening of Thursday, June 10, 2021, to consider expelling member Rep. Mike Nearman for letting violent protesters into the Oregon Capitol in December.

and assaulted journalists. "Nobody should have opened the door to the people who were here that day," said Rep. Daniel Bonham, a Republican and a member of Holvey's special committee.

The final straw for Republican House members came on June 4, when video emerged showing Nearman choreographing how

he would let protesters into the Capitol a few days before it actually happened. For his fellow lawmakers, that was proof it was a premeditated act, which Nearman acknowledged. All 22 of his fellow House Republicans wrote him on June 7, strongly recommending he resign.

As lawmakers gathered to decide Nearman's fate, a few dozen people waving American flags and one carrying a sign saying "I am Mike Nearman" gathered outside the Capitol. One repeatedly kicked a metal door, sending booms through a marble hallway of the building.

Nearman was seen on security video opening a door to protesters on Dec.

21 as lawmakers met in emergency session to deal with economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic. Protesters barged into the building, which was closed to the public because of coronavirus safety protocols, got into shoving matches with police and sprayed officers with bear spray.

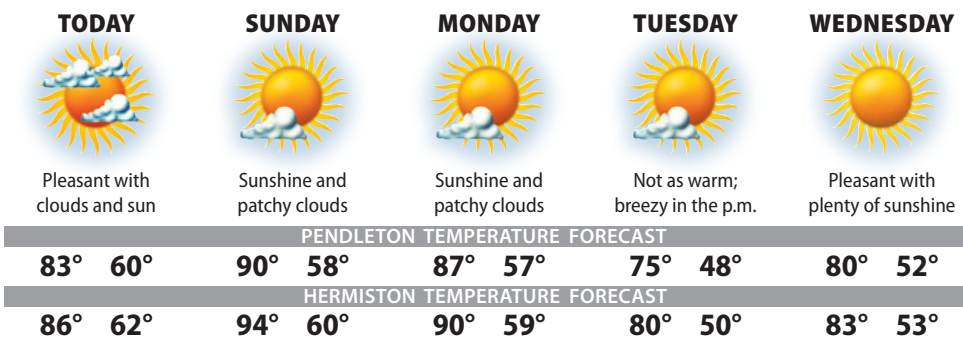
"It's impossible to overstate the seriousness of the reason we are here today," Holvey said during the committee hearing. "Rep. Nearman enabled armed, violent protesters to enter the Capitol, breaching the security of the Capitol, which was officially closed to the public, and also endangered the authorized staff and legislators inside the building."

Hundreds of people provided written testimony to the House Special Committee On December 21, 2020, which was composed of three Democrats and three Republicans.

Some who testified excoriated Nearman as a secessionist. Others praised him for letting people into the Capitol, saying residents should be allowed to attend even though hearings are livestreamed on video.

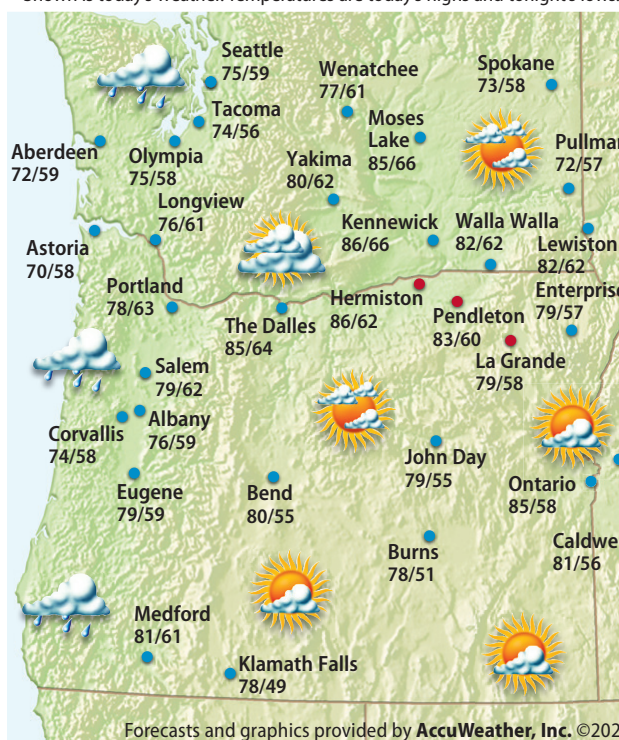
Nearman also faces two misdemeanor criminal charges, and has said he will seek a trial by jury.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



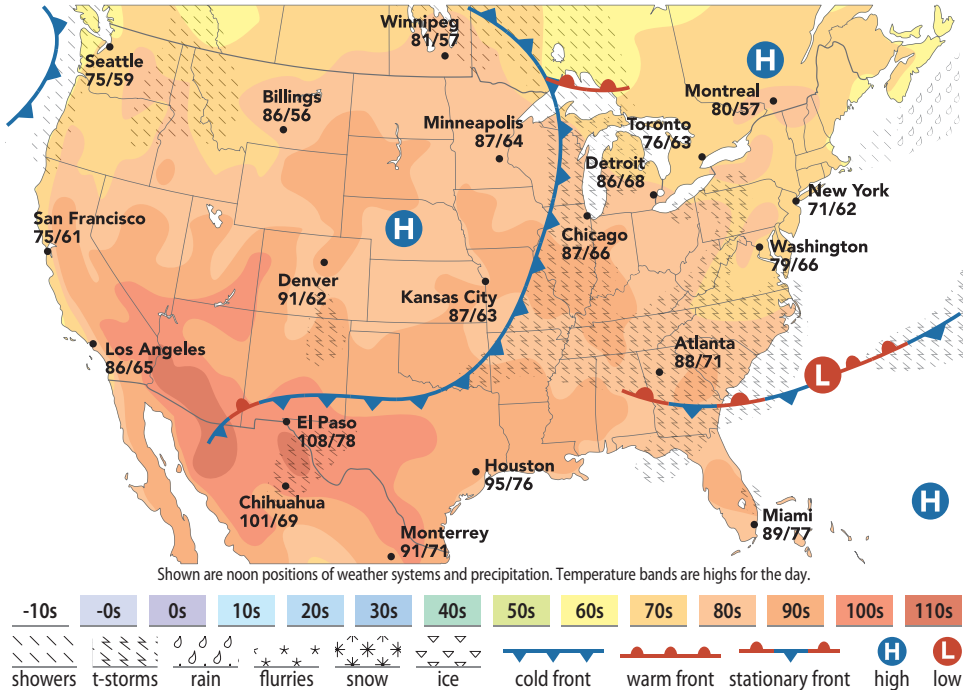
ALMANAC

Table with weather statistics for Pendleton and Hermiston, including temperature, precipitation, and wind data.

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 109° in Pecos, Texas Low 20° in Stanley, Idaho

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Mandatory minimum prison sentences won't change this legislative session

By CONRAD WILSON
Oregon Public Broadcasting

SALEM — Oregon lawmakers won't make any changes to mandatory minimum prison sentences this legislative session.

"At this point, I don't see us being able to move anything forward," Sen. Floyd Prozanski, D-Eugene, told Oregon Public Broadcasting on Thursday, June 10.

Prozanski is the chief sponsor of Senate Bill 401, which would have made sentences for Measure 11 crimes other than murder presumptive, rather than mandatory, granting judges more discretion.

The bill is currently in the Senate Rules Committee, where Prozanski said he expects it to stay.

Voters passed Measure 11 in 1994, setting a statutory floor for how long a person must spend in prison for certain convictions, such as murder, assault, rape and robbery. Making changes to Measure 11 requires a

two-thirds vote in the Legislature, meaning Prozanski would've needed to get several Senate Republicans on board.

Going into a legislative session where racial equity and law enforcement were major themes, several bills proposed sweeping changes to Measure 11. As the session progressed, however, those bills each began to drop potential changes.

With the legislation stalled and time in the session running out, Prozanski quietly pitched a trimmed version of the bill late last month. Rather than scrapping Measure 11 altogether, the amended bill would have stripped mandatory sentences for second-degree assault and second-degree robbery. The charges are some of the most common Measure 11 offenses.

The Oregon District Attorneys Association came out against the stripped-back changes to Measure 11, saying it was too late in the session to provide guarantees

for crime victims that the bill wouldn't have unintended consequences that could hurt future victims.

"I don't know who I'm really supposed to be negotiating with," Prozanski said of the Oregon District Attorneys Association. "There are 36 independent elected officials."

District attorneys in Deschutes, Multnomah and Wasco counties supported SB 401, and any changes to Measure 11. Those district attorneys have taken a more progressive approach to the office, and agree that aspects of Measure 11 have disproportionately affected communities of color. Prozanski said he believes that getting support from district attorneys would have helped in lobbying Republican lawmakers to support the bill.

The Oregon District Attorneys Association and some Republican lawmakers have said they're open to conversations after the session ends, especially on more narrow changes to Measure 11.

IN BRIEF

USDA funding available for drought-stricken states

PORTLAND — As drought conditions deepen across the West, farmers and ranchers in four states can apply for \$41.8 million in federal aid to preserve the health of their working lands.

Funding is available in Oregon, California, Colorado and Arizona through the USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program, which helps producers pay for conservation projects to protect natural resources and improve drought resilience.

Applications are due July 12. EQIP is the agency's flagship conservation program, administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Projects may include air and water quality, soil health, protecting wildlife habitat and wildfire

prevention and recovery. The \$41.8 million in targeted funding will be offered through Conservation Incentive Contracts, a new EQIP option created in the 2018 Farm Bill to address high-priority conservation and natural resources concerns — including drought.

Contracts run from 5 to 10 years, with producers sharing the cost to implement conservation practices, such as forest stand improvement, brush management, prescribed grazing, pasture and hay planting, livestock watering systems and cover crops.

NRCS announced it is setting aside \$11.8 million directly for drought mitigation. While the contracts are only available now in a few select states, NRCS says it will roll out the program nationwide in fiscal year 2022.

—EO Media Group

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.

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