

Legislative leaders seek compromise on tax reform

By Paris Achen
Capital Bureau

The heads of the Oregon House and Senate said Monday they still have not brought together two opposing sides over how to fix the state's unstable revenue system and a \$1.8 billion shortfall in the next two years.

House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, and Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, have been leading an effort to negotiate a compromise between public unions and business leaders. But they are making slow progress with just a week before the 160-day legislative session.

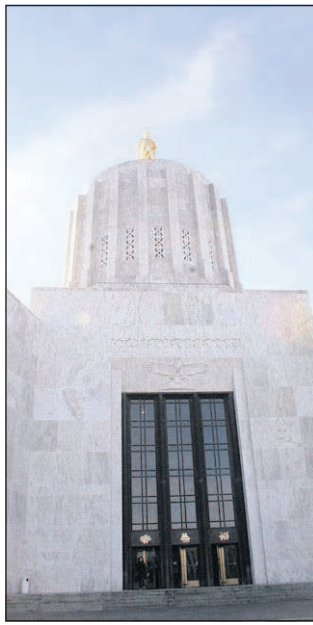
"I'm very discouraged right now," Courtney said. "We do not have them in the room together."

The two groups last year waged the most expensive political battle in the state's history over a \$6 billion corporate sales tax measure. Voters overwhelmingly defeated Measure 97 on the November ballot.

Since then, victorious business leaders have acknowledged the state needs more revenue stability. The state's system is overly dependent on income tax revenue, which fluctuates drastically with economic spikes and dips. However, business leaders say they won't support new business taxes until lawmakers curtail rising costs associated with the Public Employees Retirement System.

Courtney said he spurred the Legislature's budget writers last week to release a budget without any new revenue to give lawmakers a reality check on what they're facing in terms of cuts. Budget writers unveiled a plan that would entail kicking more than 350,000 people off Medicaid, larger class sizes, university tuition hikes and cuts in child welfare workers.

Beyond having informal meetings with business and labor leaders, Gov. Kate Brown has largely distanced herself from the push for revenue reform since the failure of Measure 97, which she endorsed. In her proposed budget last



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press

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month, Brown laid out several new taxes to address the state's revenue shortfall but excluded any that would raise business taxes.

"She has seven taxes we're supposed to vote on individually, but basically, long-term she's thinking 2018," Courtney said. "This also complicates this long-term perfect fix" that some lawmakers are pursuing.

In an email to the Pamplin Media Group/EO Media Group Capital Bureau, Chris Pair, a spokesman for Brown, did not address the governor's preference for timing in revenue reform.

"The cuts proposed put into human terms the devastating consequences families face with a tax system that is unstable, inadequate, and fundamentally out of balance to meet Oregon's essential needs," Pair wrote in the email. "While Gov. Brown will continue working hard to make sure state government does more with less, she maintains that we must work to develop a long-term solution that doesn't put Oregonians at risk every two years"

Outlaws put scare in top-ranked Panthers

PREP ROUNDUP

Other hoop teams split in weekend action; wrestlers show well in Idaho tourney

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

The Enterprise Outlaws boys played the game of the year in losing a heart-stopping 47-46 stunner to No. 1 ranked Imbler on Jan. 21.

The Outlaws looked to fold early as Imbler built a 19-5 lead in the first quarter with the Outlaws having difficulty finding the basket. The second quarter saw the tide slowly changing as both teams scored 10 with the score 29-15 at the half.

The second half saw the Outlaws creeping closer as they began to penetrate Imbler's zone defense with Brett Greenshields leading the way. Greenshields dominated underneath the basket on both ends of the court. The end of the third quarter saw the Outlaws whittling away at the Panthers lead with Imbler up after three quarters, 32-28.

The fourth quarter opened with the Outlaws getting right down to business, eventually surpassing the Panthers with 6 minutes left, 34-32. The Outlaws built on the lead, ahead 41-38 with only 3:49 remaining and 46-44 with less than a minute remaining.

The Panthers sank a three-pointer to put them in the lead for good. Brycen Locke sank a shot with 40 seconds on the clock and the Outlaws got the ball back, feeding it to Greenshields in the key, whose turnaround jumper hung tantalizingly on the rim before dropping off with only a few seconds left.

Still, a herculean effort and a game of which Greenshields and the other Outlaws should be proud. Game stats were not made available to the Chieftain.

The boys also lost their Jan. 20 game against Union, 50-42. The weekend left the boys 1-2 in league play and 8-8 overall.

Enterprise Girls

The Outlaws girls went 1-1 over the weekend defeating Union, 38-24, on Friday but losing, 44-34, to Imbler the following evening.

The Outlaws are 2-1 in league play and 12-3 overall.

Joseph boys

The Joseph Eagles boys went 1-1 for the weekend, losing a tough one to Nixyaawii, 57-52, on Friday.

"We had a really bad first quarter and a really bad fourth quarter, and it cost us against Nixy. We'll beat them next time though," said coach Olan Fulfer.

He pointed to Caevan Murray as a highlight, Murray led the scoring in both



Steve Tool/Chieftain

Enterprise Outlaws junior Brett Greenshields shoots for two in the waning moments of Saturday's heart-stopping 47-46 loss to the top-ranked Imbler Panthers. Greenshields contributed 12 points for the Outlaws.

weekend games and rebounding as well. "He and Tyler Homan have been stepping up like crazy the last month," Fulfer added.

Saturday's home game against Cove saw the Eagles prevailing, 56-33. Fulfer said Cove played tough in the first quarter, leading 20-16 before the Eagles' hammer fell, leaving Cove in a shambles during the remaining three quarters.

The weekend left the boys with a 6-2 league record and 12-4 overall.

Joseph girls

The lady Eagles also came away from the weekend 1-1, losing at Nixyaawii, 64-35, while handily defeating Cove at home, 51-30.

"We came out extremely flat with no emotion or drive," said coach Lance Homan. He added that after a 26-2 first quarter drubbing, the Eagles played consistently.

"It was nice to see our young kids come in and play well against one of the top teams in the state. I was very impressed," Homan said.

After the Cove game, Homan was worried about the Eagles lack of energy. It was apparently an aberration.

"It was awesome to see how our girls responded after the Nixy game and the

late night. We weren't perfect by any means, but we played harder and with more energy than Cove. The total team effort was impressive," Homan said.

The weekend left the lady Eagles 5-3 in league play and 11-4 overall.

Enterprise wrestling

The Enterprise wrestling team traveled to Idaho for the Clearwater Invitational over the weekend.

Competing against much larger schools, Enterprise saw Shane Lund and Cole Farwell at the top of the 113 lbs. and 120 lbs., respectively. Jonny Sarbacher placed second at 182 lbs.

Coach Troy Farwell mentioned 145-pounder Jake Coggins came away with two confidence-building wins in his bracket.

"It was exciting for some of the younger kids to get some matches in. Seeing Jonny (Sarbacher), a sophomore getting second at 182 pounds was really big," Farwell said.

He added that the team was looking good for the district meet coming up in four weeks.

The team is traveling to John Day for a dual meet on Friday and driving over to New Plymouth, Idaho, the following day.

Gillnetters get continued access to main Columbia channel

Decision puts Oregon at odds with Washington

By Eric Mortenson
Capital Bureau

SALEM — By a tight 4-3 vote, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission veered away from an outright ban on gillnetting in the main channel of the lower Columbia River and set the state at odds with neighboring Washington on how to manage protected salmon and steelhead.

The commission heard more than six hours of staff reports and strikingly discordant testimony from commercial gillnetters and recreational anglers, who have argued for years over who gets to catch how much of seasonal salmon runs, and what methods they may use.



Eric Mortenson/Capital Press

Steve Fick, foreground, owner of Fishhawk Fisheries in Astoria, said gillnetters have bent over backwards to make Columbia River salmon fishing reforms work.

On Friday, the commercial fishery won the day, their case made by a parade of gritty Astoria gillnetters who spoke of generational ties, community businesses and family fortunes

at risk if they were no longer able to make a living.

The ODFW commission had previously appeared more likely to continue phasing out gillnets in the river's main

channel, a move long favored by the sports fleet, the recreational anglers and guides who hit the river with line and hook. Washington and Oregon agreed to such a plan, set in motion in 2012 by then Gov. John Kitzhaber.

Instead, the commissioners approved an "enhanced" rebalancing plan, one of six options analyzed by ODFW staff. Highlights of the plan include:

- Recreational anglers are allowed to account for 80 percent of the spring and summer Chinook, the wild fish protected under the Endangered Species Act. Commercial anglers will get 20 percent of what is called the "ESA impact" and will be allowed to fish the main stem with tangle nets.
- The harvest of fall Chinook would be split 66 percent recreational, 34 percent commercial, with main stem gillnetting allowed in Zones 4 and 5 and Coho tangle nets in Zones 1, 2 and 3.

- Anglers can use barbed hooks in the Willamette River.

- The Youngs Bay control zone will continue to be closed to sports fishing.

Gillnetters had offered their own plan that would have given them a greater share of salmon. Steve Fick, owner of Fishhawk Fisheries in Astoria, said he wasn't disappointed in the commission's action.

"When everybody's a little unhappy, it's probably a reasonable decision," he said.

Recreational anglers maintain that gillnetting takes fish indiscriminately, with no way to differentiate between wild fish and hatchery fish, for example. They argue that gillnetting should be relegated to the river's side channels and say the sports fleet has a much bigger economic impact.

"We fill the hotels to bursting in Astoria," said Liz Hamilton, executive director of the Northwest Sportsfishing Industry Association.

During Friday's hearing, recreational anglers the commission shouldn't vary from the path set by Kitzhaber and the "concurrent management" agreement between Oregon and Washington. "A deal is a deal," one man testified.

Earlier this month, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission voted to remove gillnetting from the main channel in two years and increasing recreational anglers' share of fall, spring and summer chinook.

The Washington commission also directed the wildlife department to "aggressively pursue" a buyback program for commercial gill net licenses.

Oregon chose a different route. Fick, of Fishhawk Fisheries, shrugged off the split between the states. If necessary, he said, there is technology to "draw and management line down the river" and let each go its own way.

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