



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

# Senate passes bill to strip guns from stalkers, abusers

By **PARIS ACHEN**  
Capital Bureau



File photo

**A controversial bill stripping gun rights from convicted stalkers and former intimate partners convicted of abuse was approved in the Senate with 16 votes from Democrats. One Democrat and 12 Republicans voted against it. The bill now goes to the governor.**

and across the nation engaged and joining the call for gun safety legislation," Brown said in a statement. "It's long past time we hold the White House, Congress, and legisla-

SALEM — A bill to strip gun rights from convicted stalkers and intimate partners convicted of abuse was approved in the Senate 16-13 Feb. 22. The legislation goes to Gov. Kate Brown who says she intends to sign it.

Brown urged U.S. lawmakers to enhance protections against gun violence nationwide in the wake of a deadly mass shooting Feb. 14 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla. The latest in a string of attacks on U.S. schools has sparked unprecedented demonstrations across the country for stronger gun laws.

"Now's the time to enact real change, and I'm encouraged to see students in Oregon

tors accountable."

House Bill 4145 closes the so-called "boyfriend" or "intimate partner loophole," in state law that omitted stalkers and abusers in some intimate relationships.

Sen. Floyd Prozanski, D-Eugene, who presented the bill on the Senate floor, said that his sister was murdered by a boyfriend with a gun and urged his colleagues to support the new protections. The legislation also would require Oregon State Police to notify other law enforcement when they learn someone has tried to obtain a gun illegally.

Brown described the bill as "bipartisan," and in the House, the bill did receive support from both parties. However, in the Senate, opposition, rather than support, was bipartisan.

**“THIS IS NO TIME FOR AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE.”**

— **Sen. Betsy Johnson**  
D-Scappoose

Representatives of Giffords, the anti-gun violence group led by former U.S. Rep. Gabby Giffords of Arizona, and her husband, NASA astronaut Capt. Mark Kelly, praised Thursday's vote by the Oregon Senate. "Oregon is continuing to step up to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people," said Robin Lloyd, Giffords government affairs director. "Guns and domes-

tic violence are a particularly lethal combination that have deadly consequences. Once this bill is signed loopholes will finally be closed in state law that let domestic abusers possess guns."

Twelve Republicans and one Democrat, Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, voted against the measure. Johnson said she opposed the bill because it would give estranged dating partners a way to seek revenge. "This is no time for an emotional response," Johnson said of the bill.

Under existing law, only convicted abusers in domestic relationships, such as a spouse, former spouse, co-parent or live-in partner, are prohibited from having guns. The bill expands the ban to stalkers and current

and past intimate partners of all kinds.

Sen. Herman Baertschiger Jr., R-Grants Pass, said existing law already bans abusers who have been intimate sexual relationships with their victim from buying or possessing guns. He said the language in the bill is full of "ambiguity" and would likely result in other loopholes.

A study by the Oregon Department of Justice showed that more than 16 Oregonians were killed in nine separate domestic violence incidents between Dec. 25, 2016, and Jan. 16, 2017. Not all of the fatalities involved romantic relationships. Laws aimed at keeping guns from abusers have reduced homicides of intimate partners, according to recent research published in the American Journal of Epidemiology.

# Senate passes business tax bill

By **Claire Withycombe**  
Capital Bureau

heads to the Oregon House of Representatives.

All Republicans present voted against the measure, as did one Democrat, Sen. Betsy Johnson of Scappoose.

Sen. Brian Boquist, R-Dallas, says he plans to sue the state of Oregon over the revenue package.

Under the state's Constitution, bills for "raising revenue" require a three-fifths majority vote rather than a simple majority, and must begin in the House of Representatives.

Boquist believes the bill qualifies as a bill for raising revenue and thus must meet those guidelines. However, to date there has been no opinion from the legislature's attorneys on that question. Boquist told colleagues on the Senate Floor that he'd requested an opinion Feb. 14.

Earlier versions of the legislation laid out broader tax changes, but the bill was pared down early this week in an amendment after what the bill's sponsor described as "general" negative feedback.

Senate Democrats have cast the amended bill as allowing Oregon to assert its "self-determination," in the words of Senate Majority Leader Ginny Burdick, D-Portland, and tout the support of the pro-business Tax Foundation for repealing the deduction.

Opponents of the "plan argue that this is a tax hike on

Oregon businesses, an argument that stretches the imagination," wrote Nicole Kaeding, director of special projects at the Tax Foundation, in a post on the organization's website Thursday. "No business currently receives this deduction in Oregon; preventing it from existing in the state doesn't cause a tax increase."

State Sen. Mark Hass, D-Beaverton, sponsor of the bill and chair of the Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue, contended the deduction, when combined with the favorable state tax rates for pass-through businesses that the Legislature passed in 2013, would be another giveaway to the same group of people.

"This bill will not cause any small business in Oregon to pay one cent more in taxes than it did last year," Hass said in a statement after the bill's passage. "The folks we're talking about already enjoy a lower state tax rate on their net income, and they just got a 20 percent federal deduction. We're simply unhitching the state from the Trump tax train so they aren't double-dipping on the deduction."

The move is expected to allow the state to collect \$244 million more in taxes through mid-2019 than if Oregon allowed the deduction from state income taxes.

Republicans cast the measure as a "hit" to small business owners in the state and claimed it would put small businesses at a disadvantage compared to larger companies, which are benefiting from dramatically lower federal tax rates as a result of tax reform.

"Democrats claim that (the bill) will merely prevent businesses from 'double-dipping,'" Boquist said in a statement. "This is wrong."

# Oregon's universal health care measure dies in the Senate

By **PARIS ACHEN**  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — A legislative referral to ask voters to amend the Oregon Constitution to make access to cost-effective and affordable health care the right of all of the state's residents lacks the votes to pass the Senate, according to Senate Democrats.

Despite proposed wording changes, "there were still concerns about individual suing the state," said Sen. Laurie Monnes Anderson, D-Gresham, chairwoman of the Senate Health Committee. "We were just down to the wire. Trying to come to an agreement on language changes was just really tough."

The measure, called House Joint Referral 203, passed the House along party lines Feb. 13.

Mannes Anderson announced Monday, Feb. 26, that her committee would not hold a vote on the referral. Even though the committee had enough votes to send the measure to the Senate floor, there are not enough votes to pass the bill in the larger body, she said.

"The bill would have needed extensive amendments for it to get the support it needs in the Senate, and given this late timing in the session, the committee chair made the difficult decision to not move forward with it," said Senate Majority Leader Ginny Burdick, D-Portland.

Had the referral been approved in the Legislature, the proposal would have gone to voters in the November general election.

In the House, all 35 Democrats voted for the measure, while the 25 Republicans



Pamplin Media Group

**Rep. Mitch Greenlick, D-Portland, chairman of the House Health Care Committee, was the sponsor of a voter referral to amend the Oregon Constitution to make health care a fundamental right. The measure died in the Senate for lack of votes.**

**“I’m concerned that you send it to the voters and the voters say yes and it comes back, at what expense do we pay for it?”**

— **Sen. Alan DeBoer**  
R-Ashland

opposed it.

Rep. Mitch Greenlick, D-Portland, who has repeatedly sponsored the measure, said this is the third consecutive time the Senate has blocked the referral.

In light of federal efforts to overturn the Affordable Care Act, Greenlick said it is important for Oregon voters to weigh in on whether they want health care to be accessible to everyone.


"I think we are making a terrible mistake not to give them the opportunity to tell us whether they really believe that universal access to health care is something that our citizens deserve and that we should take seriously as we consider how we move forward in dealing with the health care system," he said.

Using a catchphrase from the 1984 science fiction film, "The Terminator," Greenlick said: "I will be back."

The practical impact of creating such a right was unclear.

House Speaker Tina Kotek and Majority Leader Jennifer Williamson, both Democrats from Portland, described the measure primarily as "aspirational," but some legal experts said adding the right to the Constitution could spur litigation.

"I think we all agree that health care should be an inalienable right for everyone. I'm concerned that you send it to the voters and the voters say yes and it comes back, at what expense do we pay for it?" said Sen. Alan DeBoer, R-Ashland, a member of the Senate Health Care Committee. "We need the federal government to come to the table. I have always been a supporter of single payer ... but how do you pay for it once you approve it and the lawsuits?"



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### Student of the Week



**Gavin Nash**  
ENTERPRISE SDA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Gavin is a fourth grader at Enterprise SDA Christian School and is the son of Chad and Amy Nash. Gavin loves to make everyone laugh. He finds life humorous and enjoys finding the good in every situation. He is a creative, hardworking, and perceptive student. Gavin is a friend to all. He loves to read, experiment, and figure things out through trial and error. He has an adventurous spirit and a craving to learn.

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