

# Oregon News

OREGON LEGISLATURE

## Senator discusses comments about police

■ Critics say Republican Brian Boquist's comments, after Gov. Kate Brown told Oregon State Police to summon GOP senators to the Capitol, constituted a threat of violence for which he should be disciplined

By **Aubrey Wieber**  
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Over the past two years, a Republican legislator once an ally of Democrats has become a one-man force waging war against his colleagues to the left.

The scrutiny given to Sen. Brian Boquist, R-Dallas, intensified and was heightened to unprecedented levels in June when in one day he made two comments that literally brought national media to his door.

His comments were triggered by Gov. Kate Brown's avowal to send the Oregon State Police after Republican senators who left the Capitol in political protest. She did so at the request of Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem. Courtney and Boquist used to be friends, though a June 19 floor session showed clearly how far that relationship has fallen.

"If you send the state police to get me, hell's coming to visit you personally," Boquist said.

He fueled attention when a Portland television reporter recorded him saying if state police come looking for him, they'd better "send bachelors and come heavily armed."

The Senate Special Committee on Conduct has scheduled a hearing for today to consider Boquist's comments — the first step in possible discipline against Boquist, who has been in office since 2005.

For the first time in detail, Boquist has explained his actions and his claims that the Senate skipped mandatory steps in its disciplinary process. He made the remarks in an interview on Wednesday with Salem Reporter. The transcript of that interview has been edited for brevity.

**Q:** What is the origin of that phrase, "send bachelors and come heavily armed"?

**A:** "I'm probably not the originator of that phrase. It's probably been used in many other circumstances in the last four decades of military and government service.

So the origination of this whole discussion was, you know, over a month ago, and it went back and forth, including — there are emails on what is legal, what is not legal. Do you have the authority to arrest? If you have the authority arrest, you know, what happens? And of course, there's correspondence with the state police involved in this. There's electronic correspondence with the Marion County District Attorney. Because remember, if you're going to arrest somebody, you have to prosecute them if it's a criminal deal, because other than that, it's false imprisonment.

This comment actually come up multiple times before I actually shared the comment directly with the superintendent of state police and a captain in the building in, you know, that was out there. And of course, their response is the same as response back that, "okay, it's not our job to come arrest you." OK. And if you notice, nobody got arrested.

Now, the media is quite familiar with this are all kinds of threats floating around all kinds of quotes. The best one in the building here is they're going to arrest us and bring him in and chains and orange jumpsuits. But none of that



Aubrey Wieber / Oregon Capital Bureau

State Sen. Brian Boquist is a Republican from Dallas, west of Salem.

happens.

So in the video tape the KGW took that has doesn't release the entire 15 minutes of the interview, which our communications director asked me to do the interview. The reason is quotable, because it is a quote from, you know, at least a dozen conversations before directly with the Oregon State Police on you know, "it would be illegal for you to come arrest, it would be a false arrest."

And of course, they see this is purely political free speech and discussion, you know, within the politics and the realms."

**Q:** Did you think about what sort of response you would get?

**A:** "Absolutely."

**Q:** And what was your thought?

**A:** "The thought is, is that all of the qualified law enforcement officers and the people would know that they should not be violating the law, and that this was purely a political issue, which it is.

It is purely outright political retribution. And the fact that I have a document, which I've given to you, that says there is no complaint, informal or formal, and that it was instigated by news reporters — reporters plural — both in writing, I was told, and verbally, that this is a political issue. One hundred percent. It is unfortunate the rest of the tape was not put out."

**Q:** Were you expecting this would garner national media attention?

**A:** "I don't think I would expect national media attention at all. And of course, I mean, considering the written responses, there's no complaint. I mean, you gotta realize the media picked up and started running with this. And the real response has been over the last 72 hours in which, you know, people are claiming there's a formal complaint and informal complaint. And there's all this. And of course, that's the media."

**Q:** In hindsight, do you regret the comments?

**A:** "In hindsight, yeah, that's an interesting thing. It's like foresight, if you can see for here's my philosophy in life. So the answer is no. Here's what everybody goes around and saying, "well, in hindsight, I would do something different."

Well, the problem is, if you were starting all over ... you'd have the same circumstances in the same place, you'd make the same comment. So I look back in hindsight is know, if I, if I made a mistake, not saying I did in any particular case, or not, I'd probably make the same statement. So the notion like you can go back and, you know, change the circumstances, to me, is nonsensical. What you do is you learn by your mistakes and go forward."

**Q:** You were in the building Saturday (June 29), but not on the floor. Why was that?

**A:** "I went to caucus. The discussion in caucus was trying to end and sine die on that evening, period. That evening. And what bills we would give rules suspension for, and what bills we would not give rules suspension for, and trying to leave. There was a belief that we would be done on Saturday night.

I was asked by Herman Baertschiger, if in exchange for killing four bills, I would try and keep the peace and not go to the floor.

I think I've only stayed for one sine die. So that was my first session in the House. Because the thing happens at the end of the session, so the public understand, is what's called the Christmas tree bill. This is the literal horse trading bill. This is the bill where people get payoffs for the votes they made. And it appears to me, this was a grand payoff that happened on Sunday, back and forth. And so I generally do not vote on the Christmas tree bill because I mean, it's pork politics, and its worst as far as I'm concerned.

And so Laurie (Monnes Anderson) and I discussed, okay, well, I leave anyway. If I leave and if whomever wants to then come in and vote and have your votes count."

**Q:** When you came on the floor Sunday, were you aware that Sen. Sara Gelsler said she would not be on the floor with you?

**A:** "Absolutely not. Sara has not talked to me. Nobody's talked to me. The only reports I've seen is what's in the media."

**Q:** Did you insist on having a gun with you on the floor Sunday (June 30)?

**A:** "That is a bald faced lie. Okay, that is a bald faced lie. And three senators are entitled to their free speech, if the issue is a

legislative or political issue on the floor. If this is an employment issue, which they are claiming presently, and their shenanigans come Monday, then they are liable in a court of law. At this point, I'm going to give them the advantage that it is political free speech."

**Q:** Do you regularly carry a concealed firearm on the floor?

**A:** "Yes, I have a concealed weapons permit. Yes, I have occasionally carried a gun on the floor based on the security threat in this building is established. And at this point, I probably have 25 death threats against me.

Now, the answer to your question is that did I carry a gun down on the floor during the last couple of days? The answer is no. Furthermore, anyone who claimed I did, needs to check their facts.

Because let's face reality, it is already a hostile situation, created for political purposes."

**Q:** OK, so why did you leave on Sunday (June 30)?

**A:** "When I left, there was supposed to be two bills. We were going to do a Christmas tree bill and the Christmas tree implementation bill: pork one and pork two. Right. That's what was left.

My understanding is they horse traded, somebody horse traded. The governor threatened, this is supposedly, right. The governor, with Peter Courtney, threatened that they would line-item veto all of the Republican projects — basically political blackmail, extortion, which is probably legal in politics. Okay, so I'm not blaming her for horse trading. Apparently, what transpired is she did that, and said, you know, if you don't give me an opportunity to vote on the cigarette tax referral, that she'd veto these projects.

They brought back a reconsideration of the speaker's housing bill. And then they brought back the tobacco tax referral. So it was actually four bills in the last 20 minutes of the session, or whatever it was.

The Christmas tree project bill is always held hostage to the end, and that's the best way to do it: hostage. So if you're somebody that who's supposed to get a \$55 million project out in your district, mostly rural Oregon, by the way, and you don't, you know, kowtow, you can be have your project line-item vetoed.

That whole process that even though this is supposed

to be a public record, it's kept secret to the very end, bothers me.

Then they opened both chamber doors and both ends and they look across, and then they talk about Kumbaya. There's no Kumbaya in this building, period. There is no Kumbaya. This building has been a hostile working place for member employees, at least since February of last year.

And so this notion of then, okay, everybody's all friendly, and we make up, you know, simply bothers me, it's a charade."

**Q:** Is there concern the divide between you and other members in this building is beyond repair?

**A:** "First off, you're right, it's wide.

Here's the, here's the issue that started. On August, 17, 2018, I sat in the law offices of Barran Liebman with Peter Courtney, with Ginny Burdick and Senator (Jackie) Winters and myself, and an equal amount of House members. This was in regard to the sexual harassment complaints against the Legislature. It came apparent in that meeting that there was more than dishonesty happening on the side of the Legislature in dealing with the sexual harassment allegations.

You need to remember, I am a hostile witness in at least one of the lawsuits that's out there. There are two other lawsuits that I certainly will be called into. I have multiple written formal complaints that have been stonewalled in direct violation of law. Now, many of the members of the media familiar with so to say that we're going to have better relationships until this place is cleaned out, is simply false.

There needs to be outside state and federal investigators looking into the actions of the Oregon State Senate. To my knowledge, I do not know that that is not happening right now. And so, no, we're not going to have good working relationships to the clean house."

**Q:** Are you going to show up to the hearing today?

**A:** "If there's a hearing, I'll come. I don't even know what the committee hearing is going to consider. So I can't make a speculation of what it is they're going to do."

Reporter Aubrey Wieber: [aubrey@salemreporter.com](mailto:aubrey@salemreporter.com) or 503-575-1251. Wieber reports for

## SALES TAX

Continued from Page 3A

Democratic lawmakers pointed to a range of pressing funding needs, particularly education, but also mental health care, rape kit testing and orca recovery.

The second motivation, lawmakers said, was residents' annoyance.

"It's very unpopular with Washington residents that may be standing in a line," and hearing Oregonians skip sales tax, said Democratic state Rep. Sharon Wylie of Vancouver. "And the people in line listening to this don't care for it very much."

This year, Wylie voted to get rid of the automatic exemption, despite having supported it in the past. She says she's heard the concerns of the business community.

Lawmakers' third motivation was the potential abuse of the system.

Some legislators fixed on the idea that people were misusing the sales tax exemption. They pointed to Washington residents undermining the tax base by using old Oregon IDs to skip sales tax. So they tried to make that harder.

"We didn't get rid of the exemption, but we changed the way it's carried out," Rolfes said.

Now instead of showing ID, shoppers from places without sales tax will have to save all their receipts and submit them once a year to get the 6.5% state sales back. Local sales tax can't be recouped.

How many people will go to that trouble? The state's fiscal analysis estimates only 21% of Oregon shoppers will bother to ask for their money back. That means the \$54 million in projected revenue relies largely on the inaction of Oregon shoppers.


Saving receipts is too much hassle for Michele King, of St. Helens, Oregon. She's done it before, in her work life, and she doesn't want to do it for her family.

"That's a lot of work to expect a mom to do, frankly," she said. "It's too much."

Until now, King has made a weekly shopping trip across the river to Longview, Washington. She hits the Walmart Supercenter for groceries and the Home Depot for supplies. She's renovating a house and has a long summer shopping list: roof shingles, insulation, doors, cabinets, etc.

But now she says her money will stay in Oregon. She'd rather brave traffic than receipts.

**EARTHLINK INTERNET**  
HIGH SPEED INTERNET



Enjoy big game internet speeds without spending big bucks!

<p>Get Connected for as low as <b>\$14.95/mo.</b></p> <p><b>HyperLink™</b> High Speed Internet</p> <p><small>Available in select areas. See earthlink.com for details.</small></p>	<p>Get Connected for as low as <b>\$49.99/mo.</b></p> <p><b>Satellite Internet</b></p> <p><small>Available in select areas. See earthlink.com for details.</small></p>
--	--

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL AUTHORIZED RETAILER  
**855-977-9436**

Authorized Dealer  
**EarthLink**

Your Family Deserves The

**BEST** Technology... Value... TV!...

**\$59.99** MONTH for 24 months

Add High Speed Internet **\$14.95/mo.**

190 Channels America's Top 120

CALL TODAY **1-866-373-9175**  
Save 20%!  
Offer ends 7/31/19

Subject to availability. Restrictions apply. Service provided by DSL and will be billed separately.

dish