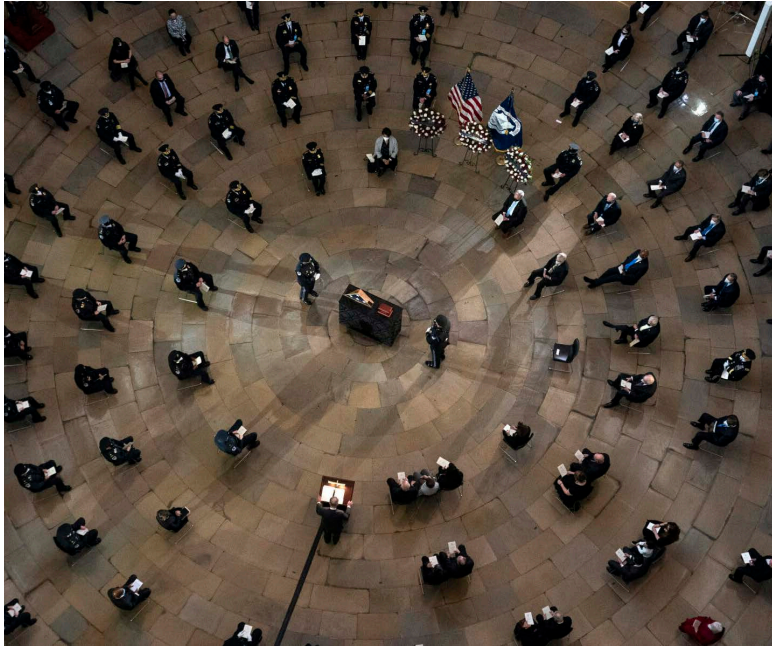


Slain Capitol Police officer honored: 'We will never forget'



Andrew Harnik/AP

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer of N.Y., speaks during a ceremony memorializing U.S. Capitol Police officer Brian Sicknick, as an urn with his cremated remains lies in honor Wednesday on a black-draped table at the center of the Capitol Rotunda in Washington.

BY MARY CLARE JALONICK
AND NOMAAN MERCHANT

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Congressional leaders paid tribute Wednesday to slain U.S. Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick in the building he died defending, promising his family and his fellow officers that they will never forget his sacrifice.

Sicknick died after an insurrectionist mob stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, interrupting the electoral count after then-President Donald Trump urged them to “fight like hell” to overturn his defeat. The U.S. Capitol Police said in a statement that Sicknick, who died the next day, was injured “while physically engaging with protesters,” though the cause of his death has not been determined.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Sicknick was a patriot who will be remembered by lawmakers each day as they enter the Capitol. “We will never forget,” she promised his family, who attended the ceremony.

The 42-year-old officer was only the fifth person to lie in honor in the Capitol Rotunda, a designation for those who are not elected officials, judges or military leaders. President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, along with their spouses, paid their respects during two days of visitation Tuesday and Wednesday, as did members of Congress and his fellow law enforcement officers. Both Biden, who visited Tuesday night, and Harris on Wednesday laid their hands on the urn in remembrance.

After the ceremony, Sick-

nick's urn was taken out of the building as hundreds of his fellow officers lined the Capitol's east front. They saluted his hearse as it departed for Arlington National Cemetery, where he will be interred.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, speaking at the ceremony, talked of the deep scars left by the assault. “Let us all be a comfort to those who continue to recover from injuries, seen and unseen, from the attack on Jan. 6,” Schumer said.

He said Sicknick was the “quiet rock” of his unit who was “caught at the wrong place at the wrong time, on a day when peace was shattered.”

Sicknick, of South River, New Jersey, enlisted in the National Guard six months after graduating high school in 1997, then deployed

to Saudi Arabia and later Kyrgyzstan. He joined the Capitol Police in 2008. Like many of his fellow officers, he often worked security in the Capitol itself and was known to lawmakers, staff and others who passed through the building's doors each morning.

The day was full of solemn ceremony and of reminders of the violence that occurred a month ago. Some of the evidence remains visible, including shattered windows and dented wood doors.

“Four weeks ago, the Rotunda was strewn with the debris of an insurrectionist mob,” Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell said on the Senate floor Wednesday morning. “Today, it is adorned in solemn thanksgiving for the sacrifice of a hero.”

Redistricting

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Added to the mix is the likelihood that Oregon's population growth will give it a sixth congressional seat, the boundaries for which would have to be carved out of the current five districts. Oregon last received an additional congressional seat in 1980.

Also at stake is \$1.5 trillion in federal aid that is sent to states based on their census numbers.

Oregon has 60 state House districts and 30 Senate districts. Each state Senate district encompasses two House districts within its boundaries. The number of seats remains the same, but the district lines are adjusted to balance populations.

Under the state Constitution, the Legislature was supposed to receive the data by April 1 and had until it adjourned on July 1 to submit

maps that would then go to Gov. Kate Brown for approval.

If the maps are not submitted by July 1, the redistricting of legislative districts would be done by the secretary of state, while the congressional districts would be drawn by a five-judge panel.

Fagan reiterated Wednesday that she was preparing the groundwork to draw the maps.

“The Oregon Constitution is clear,” the secretary of state said in a statement.

Fagan said the problem had been looming for months as the census missed earlier deadlines to provide basic information on its once-a-decade count of the nation's population.

“The U.S. Census Bureau has been signaling the possibility of delays since last spring” Fagan said. “We won't be caught off guard.”

Fagan said Kathy Wai had joined the Secretary of State's Office this week as redistricting

administrator. Wai previously was census justice director at Oregon Futures Lab.

Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend, a member of the Senate Redistricting Committee said Fagan's announcement was a surprise.

“I would say the secretary of state is incredibly premature,” Knopp said. “I think the idea is to try to have the Legislature do its constitutional duty. The delay is because of COVID-19 and other things beyond our control.”

Sen. Kathleen Taylor, D-Milwaukie, chair of the Senate Redistricting Committee, said lawmakers will continue to explore “all options.” It will meet with state legal experts during a hearing next week.

Taylor said leaders of the redistricting committees in the Senate and the House are asking legislative leadership to authorize legal help to represent the Legislature before the Oregon Supreme Court.

Knopp said the lawmakers would seek a preemptive judgment from the court extending the deadline for the Legislature to submit a redistricting plan. If approved, the Legislature would hold a special session for redistricting as early as midsummer.

Knopp said neither the Legislature nor Fagan may get what they want. The census delay could stretch past the Aug. 15 deadline for Fagan and the judges panel to submit maps to the committee.

“All the deadlines could pass,” Knopp said. “We need a plan in place.”

Members of the Senate committee floated possible options, though all would require legal opinions.

“There has been a discussion in Oregon about using other data,” Taylor said. “Attorneys say that's questionable since we have always used census block data.”

A forecast by Portland State

University using preliminary, unofficial data showed House districts would likely grow from the current 63,851 to 71,000, while Senate districts would grow from 127,702 people to 142,000 and each of the congressional districts — including the added sixth seat — would have about 710,000 people.

“Oregon has grown very, very quickly,” said Charles Rynerson, a population researcher at Portland State University.

Rynerson said Oregon's population is estimated at just over 4.2 million, up from 3.86 million in the 2010 census. The preliminary U.S. Census number put the nation's population above 331 million, up from 309 million in 2010. Styles said final figures could push the U.S. population as high as 336 million.

Rynerson said the greatest rate of growth since the last census was in the Bend area,

along with some eastern suburbs of Portland.

The forecast singled out Senate District 27 — held by Knopp — as one that will likely need a major boundary overhaul.

House District 54, which includes Bend and is represented by freshman Rep. Jason Knopf, D-Bend, was also mentioned as needing a major adjustment.

Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athens, said that the estimates were enough to begin discussing the rough outlines of districts for 2022.

“We can be in the ballpark,” he said. “You can figure out where you have to expand and contract.”

But Styles cautioned that the data required for redistricting is a block-by-block count. Federal and state laws are strict about the requirements for district layouts. They also include key measures required under the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act that are not yet available.

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