

**TODAY**

Today is Friday, Feb. 26, the 57th day of 2021. There are 308 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:**

On **Feb. 26, 1993**, a truck bomb built by Islamic extremists exploded in the parking garage of the North Tower of New York's World Trade Center, killing six people and injuring more than 1,000 others. (The bomb failed to topple the North Tower into the South Tower, as the terrorists had hoped; both structures were destroyed in the 9/11 attack eight years later.)

In **1904**, the United States and Panama proclaimed a treaty under which the U.S. agreed to undertake efforts to build a ship canal across the Panama isthmus.

In **1940**, the United States Air Defense Command was created.

In **1942**, "How Green Was My Valley" won the Academy Award for Best Picture of 1941, beating out nine other films, including "The Maltese Falcon" and "Citizen Kane."

In **1945**, authorities ordered a midnight curfew at nightclubs, bars and other places of entertainment across the nation.

In **1952**, Prime Minister Winston Churchill announced that Britain had developed its own atomic bomb.

In **1966**, South Korean troops sent to fight in the Vietnam War massacred at least 380 civilians in Go Dai hamlet.

In **1984**, the last U.S. Marines deployed to Beirut as part of an international peacekeeping force withdrew from the Lebanese capital.

In **1994**, a jury in San Antonio acquitted 11 followers of David Koresh of murder, rejecting claims they had ambushed federal agents; five were convicted of voluntary manslaughter.

In **1998**, a jury in Amarillo, Texas, rejected an \$11 million lawsuit brought by Texas cattlemen who blamed Oprah Winfrey's talk show for a price fall after a segment on food safety that included a discussion about mad cow disease.

In **2014**, Republican Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer vetoed a bill pushed by social conservatives that would have allowed people with sincerely held religious beliefs to refuse to serve gays.

In **2017**, at the 89th Academy Awards, "Moonlight," an LGBT coming of age drama, won three Oscars, including best picture of 2016 (in a startling gaffe, the musical "La La Land" was mistakenly announced as the best picture winner before the error was corrected).

In **2019**, after making his way from Pyongyang in an armored train, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un arrived in Vietnam's capital ahead of a summit with President Donald Trump, who arrived later in the day aboard Air Force One.

**Ten years ago:** In a statement, President Barack Obama said Moammar Gadhafi had lost his legitimacy to rule and urged the Libyan leader to leave power immediately. Space shuttle Discovery arrived at the International Space Station, making its final visit before being parked at a museum.

**Five years ago:** New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie stunned the Republican establishment by endorsing Donald Trump for president.

**One year ago:** President Donald Trump declared that the U.S. was "very, very ready" for whatever threat the coronavirus would bring; he put Vice President Mike Pence in charge of overseeing the country's response. Facebook said it was banning ads that made false claims about products tied to the coronavirus.

**Today's Birthdays:** Country-rock musician Paul Cotton (Poco) is 78. Actor-director Bill Duke is 78. Singer Mitch Ryder is 76. Actor Marta Kristen (TV: "Lost in Space") is 76. Rock musician Jonathan Cain (Journey) is 71. Singer Michael Bolton is 68. The president of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is 67. Actor Greg Germann is 63. Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., is 63. Bandleader John McDaniel is 60. Actor-martial artist Mark Dacascos is 57. Actor Jennifer Grant is 55. Rock musician Tim Commerford (Audioslave) is 53. Singer Erykah Badu is 50. Actor Maz Jobrani (TV: "Superior Donuts") is 49. R&B singer Rico Wade (Society of Soul) is 49. Olympic gold medal swimmer Jenny Thompson is 48. R&B singer Kyle Norman (Jagged Edge) is 46. Actor Greg Kinnear is 44. Rock musician Chris Culos (O.A.R.) is 42. R&B singer Corinne Bailey Rae is 42. Pop singer Nate Ruess (fun.) is 39. Tennis player Li Na is 39. Latin singer Natalia Lafourcade is 37. Actor Teresa Palmer is 35.

— Associated Press

# LOCAL, STATE & REGION

## To retain teachers of color, bill takes aim at 'first in, last out' layoff policies

BY EDER CAMPUZANO  
The Oregonian

A bill proposed by Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek would address the demographic chasm between the state's diverse public K-12 students and the overwhelmingly white teachers who educate them when making layoffs.

The agency that licenses Oregon educators estimates 40% of Oregon students are "culturally or linguistically diverse" while about 10% of the state's teachers hail from such backgrounds.

Kotek's solution would rewrite state rules that dictate who's on the chopping block if and when school districts face layoffs. House Bill 2001 would amend Oregon statutes that prioritize seniority, Kotek and the bill's backers say, in an effort to retain educators of color who tend to be newer to the profession than their white co-workers.

The proposed legislation would allow districts to retain educators of color if doing so helps maintain the school's ratio of teacher diversity. It would also allow an administrator to retain educators who have "more merit" than those who qualify for seniority protections.

"We have tried over the years to recruit and retain educators of color as our students have become more diverse over the decades," Kotek told the House Education Committee Tuesday. "What this bill is about is protecting the progress we have made in the event of layoffs."

If enacted, the bill could prove moot most of the time, as layoffs of Oregon educators are rare. Amid the pandemic, Oregon turned to the sizeable savings account it had built up during good economic times to protect schools in a downturn.

Even when positions are cut, the shrinkage is usually handled through retirements and other forms of attrition, not by showing employed educators the door. The last time that happened at scale in Oregon was in 2010, when Oregon cut school funding 9% in the wake of the 2008 recession.

With a new tax on businesses kicking in this school year and next, layoffs are unlikely.

Still, Kotek's testimony kicked off a half hour's worth of public comment on the proposed legislation during a committee meeting, much of it in support of the bill.

Bekah Sabzalian, the equitable education program officer at Meyer Memorial Trust, said teachers of color she's invited to speak with the nonprofit's leaders almost universally say they feel isolated when they work in schools with largely white workforces.

"They feel overburdened, alone," Sabzalian said.

Lake Oswego High School sophomore Alexander Aghdaei told the committee that in all his years attending the city's public schools, he's never had a teacher of color. He told the panel that recruiting and retaining such educators would make students like him feel more comfortable at school.

Aghdaei said students of color sometimes feel as though they can't be themselves when they don't identify with their peers or teachers. Seventy percent of Lake Oswego students are white, according to the Oregon Department of Education.

"It's easy to abandon personal identity in service of fitting in," Aghdaei said.

Much of the testimony supporting the proposed legislation, both written pieces submitted to the record and in speeches by attendees of Tuesday's virtual hearing, focused on how important it is that a school's staff reflect the makeup of its student body.

But some critics of the bill, including educators of color, say that although they agree with House Bill 2001's intent, the legislation goes about things the wrong way.

Hyung Nam, a social studies teacher in Portland's Wilson High School, said he's felt targeted by previous administrations for his self-proclaimed rabble rousing. He was a long-time and vocal advocate for the school's renaming before such an effort earned broader support and came to fruition this year.

Nam told the House Education Committee he fears alterations to the state's "first in, last out" policy that directs how schools conduct layoffs will give administrators a tool to oust vocal critics.



Water returning in February to Upper Klamath Lake, pictured here in a 2020, is among the lowest in 40 years of study by the Bureau of Reclamation.

## Klamath Lake forecast looks dismal for fish and farms

BY ALEX SCHWARTZ  
(Klamath Falls) Herald and News

Citing a dismal outlook on water year 2021, the Klamath Tribes have filed a notice of intent, saying they will sue the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for violating the Endangered Species Act if Upper Klamath Lake dips below levels outlined in the 2020 biological opinion this spring.

The letter, which will allow the Tribes to file suit more quickly if they decide to pursue litigation, was sent to the principal deputy commissioner of the bureau and the acting secretary of the Interior. It asserts that the bureau violated the 2020 biological opinion by diverting too much of the lake's water to Klamath Project irrigators at the beginning of last summer.

That opinion stipulated maintaining lake levels at certain times of the year to provide adequate habitat for ESA-listed Cwaam, Lost River suckers, and Koptu, shortnose suckers, which are culturally and spiritually important to the Klamath Tribes and have

been declining in numbers for decades.

"Because we went below the lake levels required for spawning season last year, they're not allowed to do that this year," said Klamath Tribal Chairman Don Gentry. "It's kind of a hard, fast requirement to be in compliance with the biological opinion."

A news release from the tribes said projected inflows to Upper Klamath Lake are some of the lowest they've been in 40 years, based on periodic briefings from federal hydrologists.

Paul Simmons, executive director of the Klamath Water Users Association, said Upper Klamath Lake is refilling at a rate in the third percentile of its period of record. Just bringing it up to the required level for sucker spawning will be hard enough, to say nothing of providing water for irrigation.

"We know that we're in a very serious situation," Gentry said. "It looks like there's going to be very little water, if at all, for irrigation."

Despite snowpack accumulation that seems to be improv-

ing as the winter progresses — as of Feb. 18, the basin's snow-water equivalent was at 80% of the median for this time of year compared to 70% at the beginning of the month, according to the Natural Resources Conservation Service — Simmons said exceptionally dry soils are absorbing precipitation that would normally melt into Upper Klamath Lake in the spring.

"You have a situation where the ground in the upper watershed is just dry," Simmons said. "To the extent that you have precipitation up there, a lot of it is just soaking in. It's a dry year on top of a dry year."

Simmons said that given current conditions, the Bureau of Reclamation is expecting an even lower allocation for the Klamath Project than last year. Though February is too early to say for sure what that number will be, Simmons said the current projection is 132,000 acre-feet.

"We would need a very, very atypical February and March to get out of the situation we're in," he said.

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