WORLD BRIEFING



Supporters of of jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny clash with police in St. Petersburg, Russia, on Wednesday.

Mass protests for Russian opposition leader lead to almost 1,500 reported arrests

Police arrested nearly 1,500 people Wednesday during a day of demonstrations throughout Russia calling for freedom for imprisoned opposition leader Alexei Navalny, whose health reportedly is in severe decline after three weeks of hunger striking, according to a group that monitors political detentions.

The largest of the protests took place in Moscow, where thousands marched through the center city. Some of the people arrested were seized before the protests even began, including to top Navalny associates in Moscow. Navalny's team called for the unsanctioned demonstrations after weekend reports that his health is deteriorating and his life was in danger.

Turnout estimates varied widely: Moscow police said 6,000 people demonstrated in the capital, while an observer told Navalny's YouTube channel that the crowd was about 60,000.

Police kill 16-year-old shown on video with knife

The fatal police shooting of Ma'Khia Bryant, a Black teenager seen on video charging at two people with a knife, came within minutes of Tuesday's verdict in George Floyd's killing - causing outrage by some over the use of lethal force by Columbus Police.

Officials with the Columbus Division of Police released footage of the shooting Tuesday night just hours after it happened, a departure from protocol as the force faces immense scrutiny from the public following a series of recent high-profile police killings that have led to clashes.

The 16-year-old girl was identified by Franklin County Children Services, which said she was under the care of the agency at the time of her death.

Biden pushes for momentum in climate fight

President Joe Biden is convening a coalition of the willing, the unwilling, the desperate-for-help and the avid-for-money for a global summit Thursday aimed at rallying the world's worst polluters to move faster against climate change. Success for Biden in the virtual summit of 40 leaders will be making his expected promises — halving coal and petroleum emissions at home and financing climate efforts abroad - believable enough to persuade other powers to make big changes of their own.

Israel strikes targets in Syria after missile attack

A missile launched from Syria struck southern Israel early Thursday, setting off air raid sirens near the country's top-secret nuclear reactor, the Israeli military said. In response, it said it attacked the missile launcher and air-defense systems in neighboring Syria.

The incident, marking the most serious violence between Israel and Syria in years, pointed to likely Iranian involvement. Iran, which maintains troops and proxies in Syria, has accused Israel of a series of attacks on its nuclear facilities, including sabatoge at its Natanz nuclear facility on April 11, and vowed revenge.

Bulletin wire reports

Firearms

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"In this legislation we kind of mash them together," House Republican Leader Christine Drazan of Canby, who sits on the committee, said during a presentation Wednesday.

Republicans were already dead set against House Bill 2510, which awaits a vote of the full House scheduled April 26. The House Health Care Committee advanced it March 30 on a party-line vote.

That bill would require the storage of firearms with trigger or cable locks, in a locked container or in a gun room. An offense is a Class C violation, which carries a maximum fine of \$500, unless someone under age 18 obtains access, in which case it is a Class A violation with a maximum fine of \$2,000. No jail time is imposed for violations.

Its chief sponsor is Rep. Rachel Prusak, D-West Linn, who has advocated it on behalf of a constituent since her election in 2018. She said she would support it becoming part of a broader bill.

"No one is under the illusion that enacting a safe storage law will stop all gun violence," Prusak said. "Many responsible gun owners already lock up their guns. The goal of this safe-storage firearms bill is to change the behavior of the portion of gun owners whose careless actions lead to death and injury of others."

Split view of changes

The Rules Committee proposes to combine it with a narrower version of Senate Bill 554, which passed the Senate on a 16-7 vote March 25. All votes for it came from Democrats; one Democrat joined six Republicans against it, and the rest were excused or absent.

The original bill would bar all firearms from state buildings, including the Capitol, and local governments would have the option of barring them from their own buildings. In essence, the ban would apply to the estimated 300,000 holders of concealed-handgun licenses, who are now exempt from weapons bans in public buildings.

The proposed amendment would

narrow the scope of the Senate bill. The proposed ban would apply to the

Capitol, but not other state buildings. (State courts, which are often in buildings maintained by counties, already ban weapons by orders on the presiding judges.)

It would allow boards of the seven state universities, 17 community college districts and 197 school districts to bar firearms from their buildings, but not their grounds. Unlike the Senate-passed bill, cities, counties and special districts would not be allowed to bar firearms borne by concealed-handgun licensees.

Sen. Ginny Burdick, a Democrat from Portland and a longtime supporter of firearms regulation, said the proposed change goes too far.

"I've been in this process a long time, and I understand the necessity for compromise," she said at a Rules Committee hearing. "But the amended version goes way too far in terms of weakening the bill."

Though the proposal would still bar firearms inside the Capitol, she said, "in the climate we live in, state buildings need to be included."

She also said if school boards have discretion to bar firearms from their buildings, their grounds need to be included, "because sports activities can get pretty hot, as we all know, and they need to be covered."

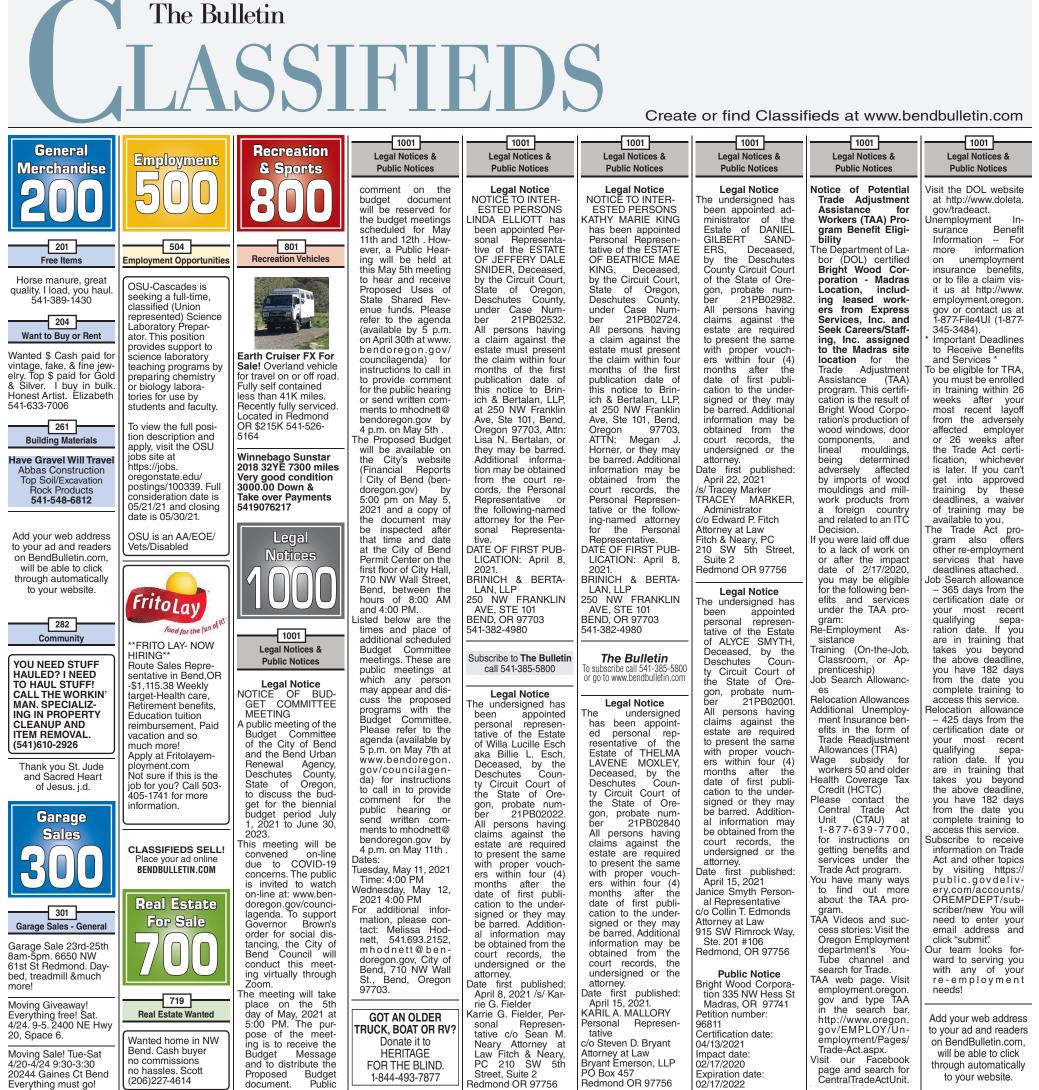
As passed by the Senate, public sidewalks and streets are excluded from regulation

Sen. Floyd Prozanski, a Democrat from Eugene who leads the Senate Judiciary Committee, offered substitute language.

"It only seems appropriate for us to give local control to school boards, community colleges and universities to make the determination what is best for them and their properties, not just their buildings," he said.

The House committee is considering other amendments, including one by Rep. Brian Clem, D-Salem, that would enable local governments to regulate firearms in public parks. He also proposed an amendment that would do away with state preemption of most local firearms ordinances — a law that dates to 1995 - but conceded it would go nowhere.

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