

The Bulletin

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■ Lottery results can now be found on the second page of Sports.

LOCAL, STATE & REGION

DESCHUTES COUNTY New COVID-19 cases per day

SOURCES: OREGON HEALTH AUTHORITY, DESCHUTES COUNTY HEALTH SERVICES BULLETIN GRAPHIC

COVID-19 data for Saturday, June 5:

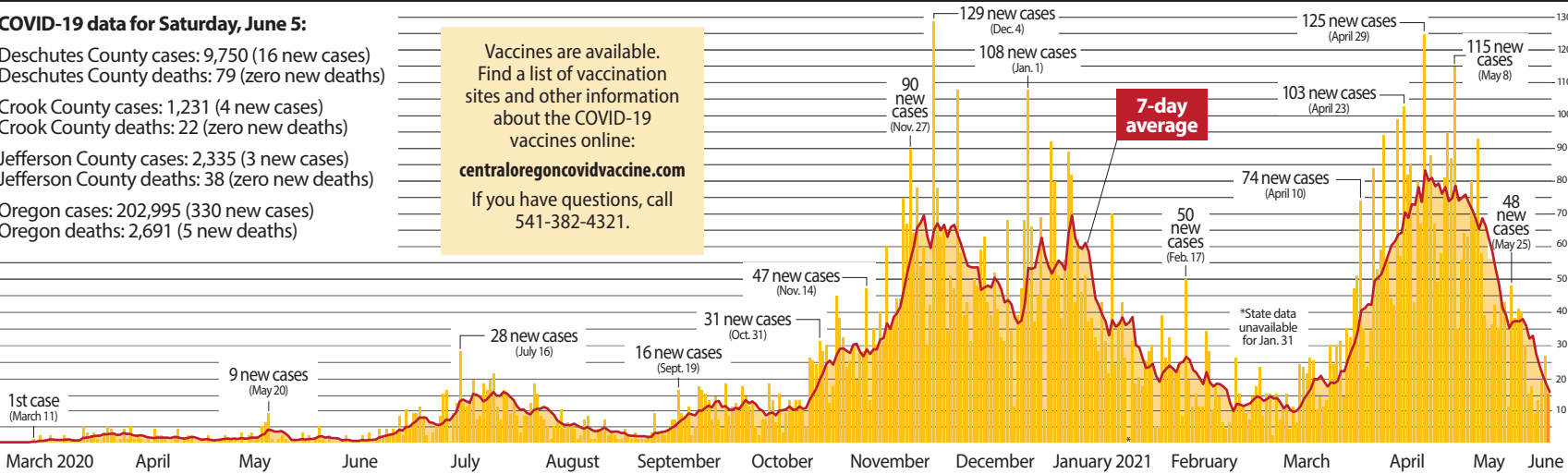
Deschutes County cases: 9,750 (16 new cases)
Deschutes County deaths: 79 (zero new deaths)

Crook County cases: 1,231 (4 new cases)
Crook County deaths: 22 (zero new deaths)

Jefferson County cases: 2,335 (3 new cases)
Jefferson County deaths: 38 (zero new deaths)

Oregon cases: 202,995 (330 new cases)
Oregon deaths: 2,691 (5 new deaths)

Vaccines are available.
Find a list of vaccination sites and other information about the COVID-19 vaccines online:
centraloregoncovidvaccine.com
If you have questions, call 541-382-4321.



OREGON HOUSE CONDUCT COMMITTEE

Panel recommends coaching for Witt

Clatskanie Democrat sent text messages to Rep. Vikki Breese-Iverson, R-Prineville

BY CHRIS LEHMAN

The Oregonian

The Oregon House Conduct Committee voted Friday to recommend that Rep. Brad Witt, D-Clatskanie, undergo “coaching and training appropriate for his conduct violation” after he texted a female colleague that culminated with him asking her to “find something better than dinner or beer” to bring them together after she rejected each of those options.

Witt said his texts were an attempt to discuss legislative business with Rep. Vikki Breese-Iverson, R-Prineville, who serves as co-chair of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee. At the time, Witt was the committee’s chair.

Breese-Iverson filed a complaint, saying the text messages were harassment and that Witt was implying that he would vote for one of Breese-Iverson’s bills in exchange for a date or sexual favors. An independent investigator hired by the Legislature to look into the complaint found that Breese-Iverson was “not unreasonable” to interpret the messages as harassment, but that Witt was not

actually trying to trade his vote.

Earlier in the week, the bipartisan Conduct Committee found that Witt engaged in “unwanted conduct of a sexual nature” and that he violated workplace rules against sexual harassment.

The Conduct Committee’s vote on Friday to recommend “coaching and training” for Witt was unanimous, but the four-member panel deadlocked on several other possible consequences. Any disciplinary recommendation requires at least three yes votes from the committee to move forward.

The two Democrats on the four-member panel supported proposals to remove Witt from any committees that Breese-Iverson also serves on, and to ban Witt from chairing any legislative committees through the end of his current two-year term.

“Someone who isn’t aware of the fact that the statements in those texts could be interpreted in multiple ways shouldn’t be in a position of power in this building,” said Rep. Julie Fahey, D-Eugene.

The two Republicans on the committee rejected those prop-



Witt



Breese-Iverson

posals, arguing they weren’t enough of a punishment.

“At some point we need to send a message to knock it off,” said Rep. Ron Noble, R-McMinnville. “The whole idea is to change the culture. If we don’t make the right decision here, we’re going to continue to marginalize people in the workplace.”

Noble offered two proposals of his own: that Witt be removed from all committees, and that Witt be “formally censured and admonished” on the House floor. Democrats voted against those.

Rep. Tawna Sanchez, D-Portland, said a formal censure was not needed at this point.

“I guess I feel like we’ve already done that,” she said. “And sadly, there’s already been a reprimand in the media.”

Fahey suggested she would support a reprimand instead of a censure. There’s little practical difference between the two, although Fahey said unlike a recommendation to censure Witt, a mere reprimand

would not go before the full House, and would simply be recorded in the House journal as having taken place in the committee.

Republicans signaled that they wouldn’t support a vote to simply reprimand Witt, and Fahey never made the motion.

At an initial meeting in April to review the complaint filed by Breese-Iverson, Conduct Committee members considered whether to remove Witt as chair of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee. The committee decided not to, but Witt said he would voluntarily step aside pending

the result of the investigation.

That decision was formalized by House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, who has broad authority to assign or remove members from committees.

On Friday, Conduct Committee members acknowledged that Kotek could simply keep the gavel out of Witt’s hands regardless of whether they formally recommended it.

“I would hope that the Speaker does not reappoint him as chair of that committee or other committees for the remainder of his term,” said Fahey.

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LOCAL BRIEFING

Central Oregon history project needs your photos

The Bulletin and the Deschutes Historical Museum are compiling photos from the 1950s to 2000s for a pictorial history book about Bend and Deschutes County due out this fall.

“We’re asking long-time residents to dig into their closets, basements, garages for photos from this period and bring them to The Bulletin to be part of the project,” said Editor Gerry O’Brien. “We are especially interested in the large events from these decades and scenes that would lend themselves to before-and-after photos.”

Photo scanning sessions will be held at The Bulletin, 320 SW Upper Terrace Drive, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Staff will be on hand to coordinate and speed the effort. Photos will be scanned on site and handed back to the owners.

Photo submission forms are also available online at Hello-Bend.PictorialBook.com.

“Please be part of this ef-

fort that will help support the efforts of the Historical Museum,” O’Brien said.

The sessions are:
• Thursday, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

• Friday, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
• Saturday, 9 to 11 a.m. and 1 to 3 p.m.
For more details, email gobrien@bendbulletin.com.

— Bulletin staff report



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