

# Class-size bill isn't a cure for the problem

A bill that's been introduced in the Oregon Legislature that originated with the chairwoman of the House Education Committee seeks to make class size a mandatory part of collective bargaining with teachers.

While every Oregonian should be concerned about our children and the relationship of class size to quality education, we think it's a bad idea because class size is a symptom of a much larger problem, which this bill doesn't address. The full Education Committee should dismiss it when it comes to a vote.

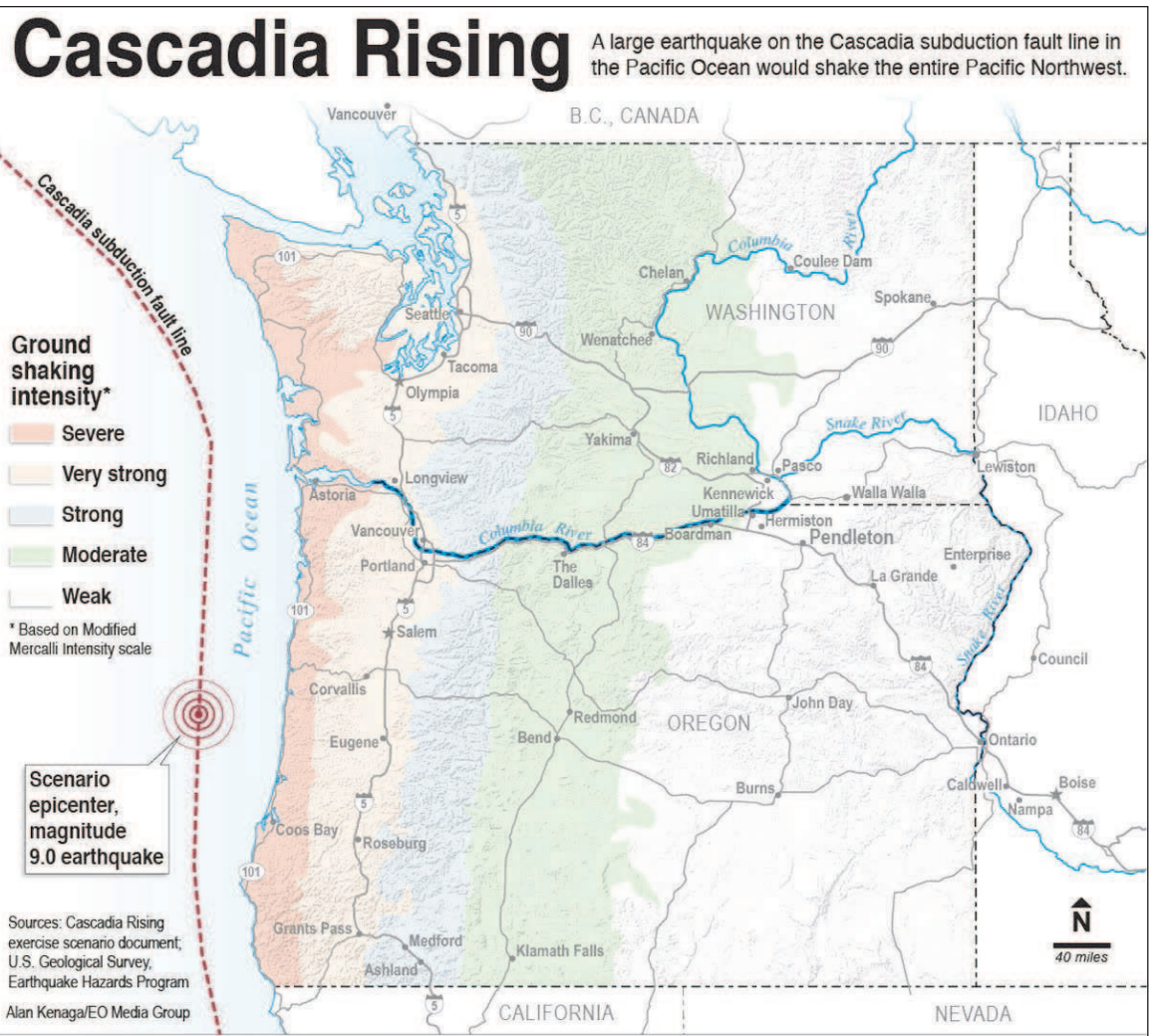
The bill was proposed by Rep. Margaret Doherty, D-Tigard, who is a former contract negotiator for the Oregon Education Association, which represents teachers. Class sizes are not currently negotiated as part of working conditions covered by collective bargaining.

Doherty's bill comes at a time when the state is generating record revenue but yet still faces a \$1.8 billion shortfall because of legacy costs like the Public Employees Retirement System and Medicaid cutbacks. The

full Legislature is struggling to provide even close to adequate, sustainable funding for existing faculty sizes, which would need to increase to lower class sizes. As Chuck Bennett of the Confederation of School Administrators said during a committee hearing last week, "There is no debate on class size; smaller classes are better for kids. ... The problem is the funding is just not there for the level of personnel we believe would be required."

Bennett also told the committee the requirement would give teachers' unions another bargaining chip without giving school officials resources to meet their demands. "You've got a bucket of demands; I've got a bucket of nothing," Bennett said.

While we will always argue for smaller individual class sizes, better teaching conditions and higher quality education, Bennett is right. Legislators should avoid bills like this that create mandates and don't do anything to address the real causes that determine class size. They instead should focus their efforts on finding a cure for the overall problem rather than simply trying to treat a symptom.



## OTHER VIEWS

# Cascadia, from Eastern Oregon

You might not even notice it. A low, distant rumble may be all Eastern Oregon feels of the most destructive natural disaster in this country's history.

Cascadia: a massive earthquake off the Pacific coast registering above 8.0 on the Richter scale.

The quake itself will likely leave a disaster zone many hundreds of miles wide. Thousands of people will be dead and missing. The Oregon Coast will be left unrecognizable. Everything west of Interstate 5 in both Oregon and Washington will be damaged.

The short-term effects in our area will not be so immediately catastrophic. But the lights will go out. Cellphones will be inoperable. Service stations may soon run out of gasoline. Grocery store shelves will have difficulty staying replenished.

While the initial quake won't topple our region or its buildings, the impact will be felt for at least a generation.

Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people in the North-

west will be homeless. And the economic hub of the northwest will be devastated.

The influx of people to and through our area will be enormous.

The quake itself is terrifying, and as a state and region we must do what we can to mitigate

budget is already trying to climb out of a sinkhole of its own.

We cannot rely on a specific Cascadia reality. Scientists believe the plate shifts every 250 years or so, and we're 50 years behind schedule. The best guess is a 30 percent chance the massive quake

is triggered in our lifetime. There will be a tremendous difference in the result depending on where, when and how it hits.

But we can learn to depend on ourselves.

We can learn lessons from Minamiso-ma, New Orleans and San Francisco. We can be personally prepared. We can talk with our loved ones about emergency preparation and options. We can have

a plan to meet if communication systems go down. We can and must keep an emergency food and water supply, and include flashlights and candles and emergency radios.

Even if the "big one" doesn't shake in our lifetimes, lesser emergencies will surely come our way.

We can be ready, come what may. — East Oregonian

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its most fatal effects. Schools in tsunami zones should be rebuilt on safer ground. Key economic and emergency buildings in Portland, Salem, Seattle and Vancouver should be made earthquake-resistant, despite the high price tag of doing so.

But we cannot rely on government to make such investments, especially at a time in Oregon when the state

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Advertisement was not self-promotion

To the Editor:

I would like to express my disappointment with the way "Paid for by Russ Denton" was displayed like some self-promotion above my article last week (in a paid advertisement), rather than the simple acknowledgment of my involvement, placed at the end, rightly required by your paper.

Over the last few months, I have spent money I didn't have to spare, to forward information in your newspaper, much as I have done, in various ways, for the last 17 years.

From around 1990 to 2000, I "penned" a book entitled "Revolution Number Ten" under the name George Bailey, out of reverence for the "spirit" associated with that name. From that day to this, I have offered it for free on the Internet (currently

at thebookofanswers.us). I say "penned" because the solutions it offers presented themselves to me: much as the location of heaven did after a quarter century of doing as I was commanded to do in Scripture.

Likewise, I was given a copy of "The Money Masters" when it was still on VHS tape, and I have anonymously shared its revelations, along with many others, with as many as I could, as soon as I could, for as long as I could, out of a devotion to God and country and for the sake of the children.

So let me be clear. This is not self-promotion. I don't want to be "somebody." Like you, I am somebody to our Father in heaven, and that's enough for me. This is simply me trying to do what the press and the clergy have failed to do: shed light into the darkness, even at the cost of

my anonymity, as we are all commanded to do.

Russ Denton  
Prairie City

### Both sides have opportunity to be heard

To the Editor:

To quote Grant County District Attorney Jim Carpenter in the article "Man who killed John Day cop will be freed," dated Feb. 22, 2017, by Sean Hart of the Blue Mountain Eagle, "a defining principle of our legal system is that both sides have the opportunity to be heard before decisions are made which affect them." How does this same principle apply to each and every member elected by voters of the Grant County, Oregon, Public Forest Commission?

Frances M. Preston  
Prairie City

Letters policy: Letters to the Editor is a forum for Blue Mountain Eagle readers to express themselves on local, state, national or world issues. Brevity is good, but longer letters will be asked to be contained to 350 words. No personal attacks; challenge the opinion, not the person. No thank-you letters. Submissions to this page become property of the Eagle. The Eagle reserves the right to edit letters for length and for content. Letters must be original and signed by the writer. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Writers should include a telephone number so they can be reached for questions. We must limit all contributors to one letter per person per month. Deadline is 5 p.m. Friday. Send letters to editor@bmeagle.com, or Blue Mountain Eagle, 195 N. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845; or fax to 541-575-1244.



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- **Canyon City** — P.O. Box 276, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0509. Fax: 541-575-0515. Email: tocc1862@centurylink.net.
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### SALEM

- **Gov. Kate Brown, D** — 254 State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-378-3111. Fax: 503-378-6827. Website: www.governor.state.or.us/governor.html.
- **Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Website: www.leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).

- **State Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario** (District: 60), Room H-475, State Capitol, 900 Court St. N.E., Salem OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1460. Email: rep.cliffbentz@state.or.us. Website: www.leg.state.or.us/bentz/home.htm.
- **State Sen. Ted Ferrioli, R** — (District 30) Room S-223, State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-986-1950. Email: sen.tedferrioli@state.or.us. Email: TFER2@aol.com. Phone: 541-490-6528. Website: www.leg.state.or.us/ferrioli.

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- **U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D** — 516 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-5244. Email: wayne\_kinney@wyden.senate.gov Website: http://wyden.senate.gov Fax: 202-228-2717.
- **U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, D** — 313 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-3753. Email: senator@merkley.senate.gov. Fax: 202-228-3997. Oregon offices include One World Trade Center, 121 S.W. Salmon St., Suite 1250, Portland, OR 97204; and 310 S.E. Second St., Suite 105, Pendleton, OR 97801. Phone: 503-326-3386; 541-278-1129. Fax: 503-326-2990.
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