

Elliott

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Elliott increased his connections by meeting with other people his age from Poland, England, the United Kingdom and from different parts of the U.S. Sayd Hussain, a 21-year-old junior at Florida Atlantic University, is running for state representative in Palm Beach, and Elliott had the chance to meet him.

"He's a year and a half older than me, and it was inspiring and cool to see that somebody who was a White House intern last year has already been elected to a local board," Elliott said. "It's somebody who reminded me of myself, who attempted at making change at such a young age, and he is succeeding so far."

He also got to personally meet politically prominent figures such as Ben Shapiro, former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, Texas Rep. Dan Crenshaw and Texas Sen. Ted Cruz.

"Not that many people got to meet Ted Cruz, and I know this because he was walking through the hotel lobby and I followed him and stopped to see what he did," Elliott said. "He stopped at the end of the hall to talk to 10 kids and take pictures with him, and then I went down there to meet him and take a picture."

Cruz made a remark in his speech on Dec. 20 that resonated the most with Elliott. Cruz talked about how people from other countries like Mexico or Cuba are trying to get into the U.S., but people in the U.S. never leave.

"People aren't leaving this country, even if a celebrity says they are going to leave if the president is re-elected," Elliott said. "There are no other countries in the history of countries that have risen so many people out of poverty than this country."

A new generation

The conference concluded, and Elliott embarked on the 11-hour flight, with a delay included, from Florida to



Contributed photo
Tanner Elliott sits 18 feet away from President Donald Trump at Turning Point USA's Student Action Summit Conference on Dec. 21 in Florida.

Boise. The flight gave him a chance to look over Chicago and the Great Lakes and to talk to some of the friends he made from Florida.

Elliott plans to continue his political career by taking advantage of opportunities and continuing to get involved with politics in Oregon.

"I'm getting involved in helping Oregon state Senator Cliff Bentz's campaign for Congress," Elliott said. "I'm paying attention to political opportunities in Eastern Oregon, and the opportunities are there. I'd like to start my political career in Oregon."

As part of a new generation of future politicians, Elliott said his generation has an ample amount of enthusiasm and energy, but the generation can be misunderstood at times.

"(People) don't believe that this generation is informed," Elliott said. "I met young people at the conference who love our Constitution and love this country and understand the basic principles of this country. This generation is informed."

He said, while some in the generation are misinformed, the same can be said about other generations. Technol-



Contributed photo
Grant Union graduate Tanner Elliott meets with U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz while in Florida for the Student Action Summit Conference.

ogy is also changing things, he said.

"I'd say we're very smart because we are the first generation to be born in technology, and we are getting information faster than any generations in the world's history," Elliott said. "Our generation is going to shake things up."

Elliott said the Republican Party is going in the right direction with the message of free enterprise, supporting our troops, standing by the Constitution and country values. However, he thinks the party needs to make more progress with diversity.

"The Republican Party needs to reach out to minorities," Elliott said. "We are making that progress in great strides, but I think we can do a better job."

For other young people looking to be politically active, Elliott's advice is to get involved, stand by your values and don't let anybody shut you down.

"Most importantly, be open-minded and be tolerant of others' ideas," Elliott said. "Never be closed-minded because they are a Democrat or a Libertarian or an Independent because you always learn things from the people that you disagree with."

Laws

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Revenge porn

As of 2020, it will be a crime in Oregon to distribute intimate photos or videos of a person without their consent. The photos or videos qualify as revenge porn under the law if they show a person's "intimate parts" or show them engaging in a sex act, the subject is identifiable, they did not give permission and could reasonably be expected to be "harassed, humiliated or injured by the disclosure."

Previously, the law only covered posting such content to a website, but now adds any other methods of dissemination, such as text message, email, private messaging in apps or handing out physical copies. It also allows victims to sue for up to \$5,000 in damages. The crime is a Class A misdemeanor for a first offense and Class C felony if the perpetrator has a prior record of such offenses.

Calling 911

Using the police as a weapon to harass someone will be a risky move starting Jan. 1, as a law takes effect allowing people to seek civil damages from someone who summoned police with the intent to infringe on the person's rights, discriminate against them, cause them to feel harassed or embarrassed, expel them from a place where they are legally allowed to be or damage their reputation or financial standing.

The law was put in place to address reports of incidents in which white callers called 911 on people of color for legal activities, such as holding a barbecue.

Marijuana convictions

Starting in January, the aptly named Senate Bill 420 will allow people with past marijuana convictions to petition to clear their record.

The bill was passed in recognition that, while Oregon legalized possession of user amounts of recreational marijuana in 2015, many people have criminal records based on possession pre-2015. Those convictions, for something that is now legal, can hold them back from obtaining jobs and housing.

After Jan. 1, people who have "qualifying marijuana convictions" can petition the court to set aside their conviction and seal the record, making it as if it never happened. As long as the conviction fits under the definition laid out by the law, the court must grant the motion.

A qualifying conviction means the person was found to possess less than 1 ounce of marijuana or other behavior described in ORS 475B.301, the offense happened before July 1, 2015, and the per-

son fully complied with the requirements of their sentence.

Employment

Employees in Oregon will receive a variety of new protections in January.

Pregnant workers will be among those who receive new protections under the law. Employers will be required to provide reasonable accommodations, such as assistance with manual labor or more frequent bathroom breaks, to pregnant employees. They will also be prohibited from denying someone employment, requiring them to take a leave of absence or otherwise retaliating or discriminating against them for requesting accommodations for their pregnancy.

Employers will also be required to create anti-harassment policies for their workplace, and will no longer be allowed to force employees to sign nondisclosure agreements restricting them from talking about harassment or discrimination they experienced at the company.

Minimum wage

Minimum wage will increase once again in July, as part of a law passed by the legislature in 2016 that set up regular increases through 2022. This year, minimum wage in Oregon will increase to \$12 in "standard" counties (mostly found on the west side of the state), \$13.25 in metro counties, such as Clackamas and Multnomah, and \$11.50 in rural counties. Grant County falls into the rural category, as do all counties east of Sherman County.

Sales tax

In July, Washington stopped granting Oregonians an exemption to sales tax at the register. But as of Jan. 1, Oregon residents who have been saving their receipts can file a tax return for the amount of sales tax they paid to Washington in 2019.

To qualify, applicants must be a resident of a state that does not have sales tax, must have purchased the items for use outside of Washington and must be requesting reimbursement for more than \$25 in taxes paid (at 6.5% state sales tax, that means spending at least \$384.62 on qualifying items). They will have to submit receipts and information about the time and place of each purchase, in addition to proof of residency.

Each person is only allowed to apply for reimbursement once per calendar year, for taxes paid in the previous year.

According to the Washington Department of Revenue's media relations office, the necessary forms will go online in January under the "general public" heading on their home page. For now, what information is available can be found at dor.wa.gov/find-taxes-rates/retail-sales-tax-sales-nonresidents.

Merkley

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company not sell drugs for more than the average price that they sell in Canada, Japan, Australia and other major European countries. The third idea is Merkley's plan.

"More or less, 80 or 90% of Americans support these ideas because they hate being ripped off," Merkley said. "With support for these ideas, why can't we get a pass? The answer is because of money in politics. If we don't change the role of money in politics, then we are going to fail on many of the fundamental problems we are facing in America."

Merkley championed his For the People Bill that would take on gerrymandering, voter suppression and dark money in politics.

Impeachment was the next topic. The question was whether or not it is possible for Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi to withhold the articles of impeachment approved by the House until the next Senate is in session, assuming that Democrats retake control. Merkley said he does not think that will be possible.

"Essentially, the work of any given Congress expires with each term so there would probably need to be a reintroduction of the articles in the House, and it wouldn't make any sense," Merkley said. "I think you'll see those articles transferred by the end of next week. Speaker Pelosi held them over the holidays as a way to highlight the need for the Senate to have a full and fair trial."

Now that the House is done, the responsibilities are on the Senate to carry out the trial, Merkley said.

In an interview before the town



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz
To recognize and celebrate the work done by the Grant County Piecemakers Quilt Guild, Sen. Jeff Merkley gave a flag that has been flown over the U.S. Capitol to Karen Hinton, the president of the guild, Jan. 5 in Mt. Vernon.

hall meeting, Merkley confirmed that funding for Secure Rural Schools and Payment in Lieu of Taxes have been approved in the spending bill for the fiscal years 2020 and 2021.

"There were a number of legislative miracles to keep the programs alive, and I held a sit-in at the Senate major-

ity's leaders office," Merkley said. "I called up Greg Walden and he and his chief of staff came over, and then I called Wyden and then his chief of staff came over, and we insisted that we weren't going to leave until we had a guarantee that we can put a bill on the floor to extend SRS."

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We want to thank everyone who took tags and donated food for the Prairie City Fire Department Christmas Basket Program.

A special thank you to the people behind the scenes:

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HAPPY NEW YEAR

CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN

Grant Soil & Water Conservation District, based in John Day, OR is seeking to fill a Conservation Technician Position. This position provides labor, technical and programmatic services to support the successful implementation of District Programs. Qualified candidates require field and technical skills, have the ability to work independently and as part of a team as well as possess strong oral and written communication abilities. Salary: \$45-\$55K DOE, Plus Benefits. For a complete job description and application, please visit www.grantswcd.net or contact Kyle Sullivan 541-575-0135 ext. 111, sullivank@ortelco.net. Application Deadline is January 17, 2020.

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