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# Republican vs. Republican

## Findley, Oregon House Republicans condemn state GOP resolution calling U.S. Capitol attack 'false flag'



Eagle file photo  
Rep. Mark Owens, R-Crane

By Gary A. Warner  
Oregon Capital Bureau

Oregon House Republicans disowned an official Oregon Republican Party claim that the riot at the U.S. Capitol was a "false flag" operation by Democrats to politically damage then-President Donald Trump.

A two-page screed featured a "resolution" calling 10 Republicans who voted for the impeachment of President Trump "traitors." It claimed the mob of Trump

**"THERE IS NO CREDIBLE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT FALSE FLAG CLAIMS."**

—A letter signed by all 23 Oregon House Republicans

supporters who smashed their way into the U.S. Capitol in a riot that left five dead and 140 police officers injured was a Democratic conspiracy to set-off the "sham" impeachment. The episode was likened to the 1933 burning of the German Reichstag in Berlin by Nazis, who then blamed the fire on others. They called for a "patriot network" to advance their claims.

"Democrats and their enablers are trying to falsely assign blame to the peaceful protesters present that day," the state GOP said.

The hyperbolic language, embrace of dark conspiracies, and invocation of Nazism was an inflammatory brew quickly picked up by the Washington Post, CNN



Eagle file photo  
Sen. Lynn Findley, R-Vale

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# Risky business

## Grant County challenges COVID-19 risk level after state data reporting error causes move to 'moderate'

By Steven Mitchell  
Blue Mountain Eagle

State health officials know Grant County didn't actually have enough COVID-19 cases in recent weeks to bump it up to the next risk level, but those officials are still requiring local businesses to enact greater restrictions for the next two weeks because of a state data reporting error.

Grant County's state representative, the Grant County Court and Public Health Administrator Kimberly Lindsay have expressed their concerns to state health officials, but as of Tuesday morning their pleas have gone unanswered and the county officially moved to the moderate risk level Friday, requiring restaurants to close at 11 p.m. and reducing the capacity for other establishments.

"Our concern is evident," Lindsay and the county commissioners wrote to Rep. Mark Owens, R-Crane, Jan. 27. "We do not feel that Grant County should be required to move to the medium risk level when indeed our true case count by date does not support that. ... We should not be penalized due to a data issue that is not originating on our end of the system."

Lindsay said the state incorrectly reported a backlog of 31 positive COVID-19 cases as occurring on Jan. 15. She said those cases did not occur within the two-week period that dictates the risk categories. For the week of Jan. 10-16, Grant County Health Department only reported 22 new cases, she said.

The state bases its risk ratings on the numbers over a two-week period. From Dec. 27 to Jan. 9, the county reported 25 cases; from Jan. 3-16, the county reported 45 cases; and for Jan. 10-23, the county reported 25 cases.

However, with the backlog added in with an incorrect date, the state metrics used for the risk levels show six cases from Dec. 27 to Jan. 9, 43 cases from Jan. 3-16 and 43 cases from Jan. 10-23, Lindsay said.

**"OUR CONCERN IS EVIDENT: WE DO NOT FEEL THAT GRANT COUNTY SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO MOVE TO THE MEDIUM RISK LEVEL WHEN INDEED OUR TRUE CASE COUNT BY DATE DOES NOT SUPPORT THAT. ... WE SHOULD NOT BE PENALIZED DUE TO A DATA ISSUE THAT IS NOT ORIGINATING ON OUR END OF THE SYSTEM."**

—A Jan. 27 letter signed by Local Public Health Administrator Kimberly Lindsay and the Grant County Court to Rep. Mark Owens



Eagle file photo

Grant County Health Department Clinic Manager Jessica Winegar during a testing event in November. Winegar emailed the state Jan. 12 alerting them to state database problems, according to documentation shared with the Eagle by Grant County Public Health Administrator Kimberly Lindsay.

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## With drug possession decriminalized, community corrections may face funding cuts

McKinley to serve as sheriff, probation director until effects of Measure 110 are clear

By Steven Mitchell  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Oregon's first-in-the-nation drug decriminalization measure took effect Monday, but the long-term ramifications for Grant County law enforcement and probation officials remain unknown.

In November, voters passed Measure 110, ending criminal penalties for small amounts of drugs, including heroin, methamphetamine, LSD and ecstasy, which will be punishable by a \$100 fine that can be waived instead for a health evaluation.

For many in law enforcement and community corrections, the passage of Oregon's Measure 110 has raised more questions than answers. Some believe it may have long-term implications for local probation offices.

Grant County Sheriff Todd McKinley said the uncertainty is one reason he has stayed on as the Community Corrections Office director after being sworn-in last month as sheriff. He plans to hold both positions until more is known about the effects of Measure 110.

McKinley said the state funds community corrections by caseload numbers. He told the Eagle, with possession of small amounts of drugs going from a felony to a civil violation — essentially the equivalent of a traffic ticket — the ripple effect could be that the total number of cases could go down at probation offices.

However, he said, the numbers could stabilize because he anticipates a rise in property crimes by addicts trying to support their drug habit.

"The tricky thing is you made something (drug possession) a violation. It's not legal, per se. It's now a violation," he said. "But everything around it's a crime: To have someone buy it or sell it is still a crime."

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Grant County Sheriff Todd McKinley