

## Guns

Continued from Page A1

“This law will have the effect of inviting an emboldened criminal element,” said state Sen. Kim Thatcher, R-Keizer. “It will make our communities less safe.”

Proponents of SB 554 say it should be up to local governments and school districts to decide if guns are acceptable in their buildings. They point to a Supreme Court decision penned by late conservative Justice Antonin Scalia in 2008 that suggested such limitations were permissible under the Second Amendment.

“As an elected official, I believe it’s incumbent on me and my colleagues to welcome the public,” Multnomah County Commissioner Sharon Meieran said. “Our sense of safety is increasingly threatened as our public buildings have become focal points for antidemocratic extremists.”

Another proponent, Multnomah County Sheriff Mike Reese, noted that sheriff’s offices are required to issue CHLs to qualified applicants without those applicants demonstrating a need, “and certainly no hands-on proficiency test demonstrating responsible gun ownership skills.” He said his office saw an unprecedented crush of people applying for the licenses in 2020.



Jaime Vandehey of Canyon City shoots a pistol at the hunter education field day at the law enforcement gun range in 2019. ODFW instructor Mark Boss is standing nearby supervising.

“One of my concerns as a sheriff in these divisive times for our deputy sheriffs and police officers in Multnomah County, when they are responding to a crisis call in a public building such as a school, is that they will encounter a CHL holder

who has brought a firearm on campus, forcing our deputy to make a split-second decision about that person’s intentions,” Reese said.

In an amendment to SB 554 passed Feb. 25, lawmakers inserted language clarifying that concealed weapon

prohibitions are limited to actual buildings, and not adjacent parking lots or parking structures. The amendment also sought to address concerns gun owners might be caught off guard by a prohibition by requiring public buildings to post signage about any ban.

And notably, lawmakers declined a proposal to insert an emergency clause into the bill, a provision that would make it operable right away if it’s signed by Gov. Kate Brown, and would make it harder for opponents to refer the change to voters.

## Walkout

Continued from Page A1

“I plan to be there,” Hansell said.

The emergency declaration extended Thursday gives the governor the legal power to issue executive orders on health and safety, including restrictions on businesses, schools, meetings and activ-

ities. It also now covers vaccine distribution.

Oregon currently has the second lowest rate of infection in the nation, which Brown and Oregon Health Authority leaders have credited to strong measures to cut off the spread on the virus. While trends in the past month have shown a steep drop in COVID-19 cases, the OHA says the virus is still a major threat and spikes have been caused by

earlier moves to loosen the rules to allow more social and business interaction.

“When I issued my first state of emergency declaration last March, there were 14 known cases of COVID-19 in Oregon,” Brown said. “Today, we have now seen more than 150,000 cases across the state, and, sadly, 2,194 deaths.”

The walkout caught senators who arrived at the Capitol by surprise, with 18 Dem-

ocrats gathering on the Senate floor, an activity that some lawmakers have worried could expose them to infection. All lawmakers were wearing face coverings on Thursday.

Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, the Legislature’s longest-serving member, came to the podium after the roll call showed no Republicans had come to the floor.

“I did not know they would do this,” Courtney told the

senators. “Yes, there are hard feelings here and there, but nothing of this magnitude.”

Courtney called the Republican action “gameplaying” and said he wouldn’t take part, opting instead to adjourn until next Wednesday.

“They need to be here and do what they need to do to show their opposition on the floor and allow us to move forward,” Courtney said.

The Republicans’ move meant five bills that could have been moved into position for votes next week are now delayed. The 18 Democrats could not move ahead without some GOP help.

“We need two more to satisfy our constitution to have a quorum to do the people’s business — all the people’s business, not just our own,” he said.

He asked the Republicans to return to the floor for the session next week. He then gavelled the chamber into adjournment.

“Very regrettable,” a glum Courtney said.

Republicans walked out in 2019 and 2020 over carbon cap legislation that Democrats said they had enough votes to pass in both chambers. House Republicans joined in the 2020 walkout.

Democrats have introduced legislation to lower the quorum required to a majority and force any member who misses 10 calls to the floor without permission of the presiding officer to be punished by forfeiting their ability to run for re-election. Both would need voter approval to amend the constitution.

Blue Mountain Eagle reporter Steven Mitchell contributed to this report.

## Peterson

Continued from Page A1

The state prosecutor, Senior Assistant Attorney General Daniel P. Wendel, said in his closing argument the first-degree theft charge was for submitting a fraudulent invoice in excess of \$1,000 with a grant application to the Oregon Department of Forestry on or about Feb. 15, 2013. Wendel said Peterson used white out to submit the same invoice on different grant applications in 2011 and 2012.

Hostetter said at the trial, for all of the charges, Peterson acted under an honest claim of right, believing he was entitled to the property or had a right to acquire or dispose of it as he did.

The charges that were overturned — first-degree aggravated theft and possession of a stolen vehicle — were for withholding fire vehicles and equipment in excess of \$10,000 from the Monument Rural Fire District in February 2013.

The appeals court summary states Peterson acquired firefighting equipment and vehicles between 2001 and 2012 and formed the voluntary Monument Rural Fire Department, serving as its chief, with the goal of becoming an official fire district.

After voters approved the Monument Rural Fire District in November 2012, the Grant County Court issued an order officially forming and establishing the district. Peterson separated from the district after disagreements with its board of directors, retained the equipment he had procured and did not turn over the equipment when the district demanded it in 2013, according to the appeals court summary.

“Nothing in the record supports the view that, in recognizing MRFD as a formal fire protection district, the county somehow converted — or ‘morphed,’ to use the trial court’s term — the voluntary department into the district or that the order establishing the district otherwise extinguished the department as a matter of law,” the appeals court ruling states. “... And, as the district’s board members acknowledged at trial, no action had been taken to transfer ownership or legal title from the department to MRFD before the district demanded the equipment from (Peterson) in February 2013.”

Further, the appeals court ruled the district could not do business until it filed its articles of incorporation in January 2014.

“The state does not argue that a legal entity that, by law, cannot engage in business transactions can nonetheless acquire ownership of property from another entity, even assuming that it could otherwise own property...” the ruling states.

## NEW DEADLINES Starting March 3rd

**Classified Liners** must be in on  
**Monday before 9:00 a.m.**

**Display & Class Display Ads** must be  
in on **Friday before 4:30 p.m.**

**Legal Notices** must be in on  
**Friday before 5:00 p.m.**

The *Blue Mountain*  
**EAGLE**  
Grant County's newspaper since 1868

195 N. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845  
541-575-0710 • www.bluemountaineagle.com

eoMEDIA  
group



## GOT INVASIVE ANNUAL GRASSES? Grant SWCD Weed Control Dept. • Working for You in 2021

Thanks to the Grant County Court and Northeast Oregon Forests Resource Advisory Committee, Grant Weed Control is able to offer a 25% cost share program for invasive annual grass control on private grazing lands, through a Title II funded Grant Project. This program will provide a maximum \$10,000 of invasive annual grass control services with a \$2,500 maximum landowner contribution to qualifying participants. To be eligible for participation, the treatment property must not be actively irrigated and must be primarily managed for livestock grazing, minimum of 20 acres in size, located within Grant County, and must contain invasive annual grass species. Applications for this limited weed control assistance opportunity will be ranked and funded on a first-come, first-served basis.

**Contact: Grant Soil and Water Conservation District Office at  
(541) 575-1554 or visit 721 S. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845  
for applications and additional information.**

*The application deadline for this program is March 12th, 2021.*