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# Sunday Statesman Journal

SUNDAY, JULY 14, 2019 ■ STATESMANJOURNAL.COM



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## Students get back on track

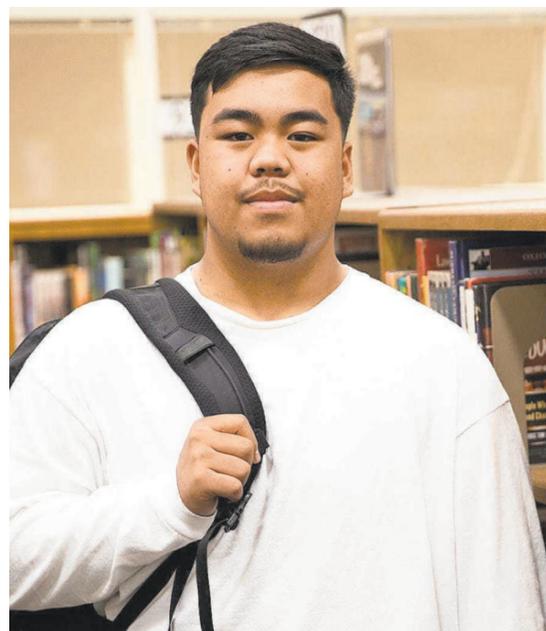
### Teens falling behind at school pursue graduation through summer credit recovery programs

Natalie Pate | Salem Statesman Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

"I didn't go up to (the mentors) because ... I have this mindset, I think many Islanders do, where we don't ask for help. It's kind of embarrassing or it's kind of tough to ask for help," Carly Amida said.

Nearly 1,500 high school students across Salem-Keizer Public Schools are back in class this summer. ¶ They're putting in extra hours four or five days a week to earn credits needed to graduate, repair past grades or improve their chances of getting into college. ¶ The district's black and Pacific Islander students perhaps stand to gain the most from these "credit recovery" programs since they historically have graduated at lower rates, attended school less frequently and scored lower on standardized tests than their peers. ¶ And although they make up only a small percentage of the overall student body — with about 1% of Salem-Keizer's nearly 42,000 students identifying as Black/African American and 2% identifying as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander — the school district is just as responsible for making sure they succeed as other students.

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"My parents, they would always yell at me because, 'Oh, you're not going to graduate because you're missing school.' It's hard to tell them how we feel. I just ... didn't feel motivated to go to school," D Moore Michiud said.



"Growing up, my parents always (told) me, 'Number one thing — graduate.' Me graduating high school is a big thing because they never really got to experience that. That's what motivates me," Kimo Liwis said.



"My brother just graduated," Chelsea Williams said, remembering when he walked across the stage and how her family reacted. "I just think about (pause) ... they'll be happy that I graduated."

PHOTOS BY MICHAELA ROMÁN/STATESMAN JOURNAL

## Did GOP walkout set stage for new era?

Connor Radnovich  
Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

When Senate Republicans fled Oregon to derail the passage of a sweeping greenhouse gas cap-and-trade bill, political analysts, journalists and average citizens across the country took notice.

But the seeds for the walkout were planted much earlier. And because the nine-day walkout fractured relationships across the Senate, leadership believes it may have solidified a new era of politics inside the

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The Oregon Senate meets, but is unable to reach quorum as Republican senators continue to be absent from the Capitol over HB 2020, a greenhouse gas emissions cap-and-trade bill, at the Oregon State Capitol in Salem June 23.

ANNA REED/STATESMAN JOURNAL

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# GOP

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Oregon Legislature.

Already there is talk from Democrats about the need to elect two more senators and establish a “quorum-majority” of 20, providing them even greater power than their current supermajority. The cap-and-trade bill (in one form or another) will be back for the 2020 short legislative session, Democrats promise.

Republicans, meanwhile, received widespread support from constituents for the walkout — including a Capitol rally against House Bill 2020 of nearly 1,000 people and hundreds of trucks during their absence — and now largely believe they would not be punished politically if they left again over a greenhouse gas bill.

“I know they’ve got the supermajority, but ... they would be completely out of their minds to bring that back,” Senate Republican Leader Herman Baertschiger Jr., R-Grants Pass, told the Statesman Journal last week.

Both sides are angry at the other, and trust in the upper chamber is at perhaps the lowest levels in modern history, senators say.

This leaves an institutionalist like Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, in the middle of a left-pushing Democratic caucus, a Republican caucus ready to “fight to the death” and fewer people interested in maintaining the decorum that had been Courtney’s goal throughout his historic tenure as the Senate’s presiding officer.

“I don’t know if anybody has learned anything from this,” Courtney said. “This was not good. We need to find a way to make sure this doesn’t happen again. I don’t sense that.”

Despite the contentious session, Courtney — first elected to the Legislature in 1980 and Senate president since 2003 — said he’s not looking toward the exit just yet.

“I have no desire to leave now,” Courtney said. “The Senate president’s term is two years. It’s two years. That’s all I know.”

## Courtney’s prophetic warning

While some senators believe that bipartisanship has steadily declined over the past three sessions, the roots of the walkout can be directly traced to November of last year.

When the general election results were announced Nov. 6, Democrats in both the House of Representatives and the Senate secured three-fifths supermajorities of 38 and 18, respectively.

Many on the left considered it to be a mandate from voters to Democrats to pass progressive legislation on issues ranging from gun control to the carbon emissions cap-and-trade bill that was a decade in the making.

“Oregonians have spoken. We want leaders to take bold action on a host of urgent issues, perhaps most pressing of all is climate change,” Tera Hurst, executive director of Renew Oregon, said in a statement days after the election. “We have a Legislature committed to passing the Clean Energy Jobs bill and acting boldly to protect Oregon.”

On the other hand, Courtney warned fellow Democrats that if they pushed too many bills the Republicans hated, they ran the risk of alienating their colleagues on the right.

Remember, he said, the 18 Democratic senators could not achieve a quorum on their own.

But those quorum concerns would not come home to roost for another six months.

Republican senators said the next step toward a walkout occurred about one month into session when Democrats passed Senate Bill 608, which made Oregon the first state in the country with statewide rent control.

It passed without any amendments and set the stage for Republican frustrations that would simmer for the next four months.

Sen. Alan Olsen, R-Canby, wrote in a newsletter to constituents shortly after the governor signed the bill that “it went through the House and Senate like a freight train.”

## Sen. Jackie Winters’ influence missed

The session — while described as horrible by Republicans and historic by Democrats — wasn’t without bipartisan agreement.

As is always the case, the majority of bills that made it out of the 2019 Legislature received at least some support from both parties.

One of the most noteworthy bipartisan efforts came on SB 1008, which reformed sentencing for juvenile offenders in the state. It was pushed by the late Sen. Jackie Winters, R-Salem, and required a two-thirds majority vote to pass both chambers.

On April 16, it passed the Senate 20-10 after Winters gave what would be her last speech on the Senate floor. Several of her Republican colleagues said after the fact they would have been willing to vote for the bill so Winters could see it pass.

Baertschiger himself went to Courtney and said the bill needed to move forward when it did.



A sign on a logging trucks protests House Bill 2020, the greenhouse gas emissions cap-and-trade bill, while outside the Oregon State Capitol Building in Salem June 19. The political fight around HB 2020 was taken to a new level Wednesday when Senate Republicans threatened to walk out because of the bill, and Gov. Kate Brown subsequently threatened to send the state police after them if they left. Rhetoric climaxed when Sen. Brian Boquist, R-Dallas, threatened Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, and Oregon State Police officers if any were sent after him. Behind the scenes, Sen. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, was negotiating with the governor’s staff about changes to HB 2020, which were ultimately not successful. PHOTOS BY CONNOR RADNOVICH / STATESMAN JOURNAL



Sen. Shemia Fagan, D-Portland, walks to the Senate floor in the Oregon State Capitol Building in Salem June 20. Republicans were absent from the Capitol on Thursday, fleeing the state and denying Democrats the opportunity to take a vote on House Bill 2020. This marked the beginning of their walkout, the second time Senate Republicans used the tactic this year. Their previous walkout was in protest of a \$1 billion education revenue package, which eventually passed after Democrats conceded other priority bills.



An Oregon State Police officer checks her watch while positioned in the rotunda of the Oregon State Capitol Building in Salem June 23. State troopers maintained a heavy presence on Sunday as at least 150 protesters against House Bill 2020 flooded the Capitol to attend a meeting of the Oregon Senate. The Senate was also supposed to hold a floor session Saturday, but canceled after state police identified a threat from militia groups in the state. Oregon Three Percenters, an anti-government militia group, previously offered support to the absconded Republican senators; the Senate Republican Office rejected the help



A protester holds a sign in support of House Bill 2020 during a rally outside the Oregon State Capitol Building in Salem June 25. Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, announced earlier in the day that HB 2020 did not have the votes to pass the Senate. A few hundred showed up to the rally calling on Democratic lawmakers to support the bill, which would have placed economy-wide caps on greenhouse gas emissions with the goal of reducing emissions to 80 percent of 1990 levels by 2050. Supporters said the bill would have created new jobs in the clean energy field and was an important step in the fight against global climate change.



A protester holding a chainsaw with an American flag attached to it stands in front of the Oregon State Capitol Building in Salem June 23. Opponents of House Bill 2020 said the bill’s regulations would wreck industry in rural Oregon, especially logging, trucking, ranching and farming. Many of the protesters who demonstrated against the bill came from rural Oregon.

Winters was absent for much of her last session in public office and passed away on May 29.

Many in the Capitol have wondered, including Courtney, how the session might have been different if Winters had been there.

She was considered the soul of the

Senate, someone able to bridge divides and find agreement even in situations where there was little to be found.

Baertschiger and many others in the Senate Republican offices said they believe Winters would have joined the walkout if it came to that. She was a principled conservative.

But she also was better at mitigating disarray among Republicans and between caucuses, so perhaps, some speculate, partisanship never would have reached such a fevered pitch.

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**Bills scrapped to end first walkout**

Now overshadowed by the nine-day walkout near the session's end, Senate Republicans' first walkout in early May set the stage for that final absconding.

It was far less dramatic, with the senators avoiding floor sessions for four days, but staying close so they could still attend important committee hearings.

They left because they wanted a billion-dollar education funding bill sent back to committee and for the Senate to take up significant reform of Oregon's public pension system.

They came back after Democrats agreed to kill bills dealing with gun control and vaccination exemptions. And Republicans agreed not to walk out again.

Critically, both sides also agreed that the greenhouse gas emissions bill "gets a reset."

But disagreement lingers over what "reset" exactly meant.

Senate Democrats contend that all it meant was to allow Senate Republicans' top climate lawmaker Sen. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, back into the room for negotiations and listen to his proposals.

Moreover, they say, some Republican proposals found their way into the final version of the bill.

Courtney said Republicans began reinterpreting what the agreement meant.

But Republicans said they had agreed to far more wholesale changes.

"Come on, give me a break. Look it up in the dictionary," Baertschiger said. "When practically nothing changes, that's not a reset."

This lack of change in Republicans' eyes would continue to play out in the days and hours ahead of the second walkout.

**Senate negotiations fall apart**

Several important dominoes fell in those final days: the passage of a continuing resolution for state spending, the second reading of the greenhouse gas bill and failed final negotiations.

If no new budgets were passed, the continuing resolution would give state agencies the authority to continue spending money at current service levels as of the eighth quarter of the last biennium.

It passed both chambers — unanimously in the Senate and with only one "no" vote in the House.

After it passed on June 17, Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, described it as "first-of-its-kind" legislation, though the res-



**Protesters against House Bill 2020 stand on top of a truck outside the Oregon State Capitol Building in Salem June 27. Hundreds of loggers, truckers and ranchers took to the Capitol steps in one of the largest rallies of the 2019 session, bringing oversized vehicles and farm equipment with them. The trucks circled the Capitol for several hours blaring horns. Thursday marked one week since the Senate Republican walkout began, and most of the crowd wanted Republicans to stay gone for the rest of session.**

olution was considered common house-keeping toward the end of previous long sessions.

What was new, however, was its use as political leverage.

During the walkout, Republicans were able to push back somewhat on calls for senators to return to pass budgets because the continuing resolution would allow state agencies to continue operating.

Courtney acknowledged that Democrats allowing it to pass could be consid-

ered a lack of political foresight, except that using it as leverage had never occurred.

"It's like, why would you all of a sudden not do it when you're always doing it? It was never used that way before," Courtney said. "I didn't know at the time we passed it we were getting enough signals about walking out."

Finally, on June 19, overshadowed by threats Sen. Brian Boquist, R-Dallas, made against Courtney and Oregon State Police officers, the greenhouse gas



**The list of senators present and absent light up on a board in the Senate chamber in the Oregon State Capitol Building in Salem June 27. Democrats held a supermajority in the Senate with 18 members, but a quorum of 20 is required to conduct any business. If at least two Senate Republicans don't return by the constitutional adjournment deadline of midnight, June 30, all of the bills that hadn't yet passed both Legislative chambers would die, including many budgets for state agencies.**



**Two protesters against House Bill 2020 point to pictures of senators posted outside the Senate chamber in the Oregon State Capitol Building June 27. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle said the rally Thursday was one of the best organized rallies they had ever seen in Salem.**

bill received its second reading and behind-the-scenes negotiations over the bill failed.

Courtney is convinced it was the second reading of the bill that sent Republicans out the door.

Once a bill is read a second time, it must come up for a vote on the Senate floor (though not necessarily on the substance of the bill). It is during a bill's third reading that a final vote occurs.

Continued on next page

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Sen. Chuck Thomsen, R-Hood River, walks onto the Senate floor in the Oregon State Capitol Building in Salem June 29. Senate Republicans ended their walkout Saturday when most of the caucus returned after nine days out of state protesting House Bill 2020 and the lack of bipartisanship during the 2019 legislative session. An informal agreement to limit discussion and debate allowed the Senate to pass 105 bills in one day. PHOTOS BY CONNOR RADNOVICH / STATESMAN JOURNAL

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After Boquist made his threat against Courtney on the Senate floor, Courtney said Sen. Sara Gelser, D-Corvallis, approached and encouraged him to get everyone off the floor.

The second reading list hadn't happened yet, so Courtney was hesitant, but he decided to recess, a move that was agreed to by Baertschiger and Senate Democratic Leader Ginny Burdick, D-Portland.

"Give me some credit in terms of this process. I'm not a sneak, but I know what first, second and third reading is," Courtney said.

When everyone came back out, Courtney said he was "frozen" at his podium waiting for the second readings. He hadn't told anyone his plan, including members of his own caucus. Courtney said he tried to encourage the reading clerk to read it quickly (the clerk declined).

Once HB 2020 was read, Courtney said he looked straight at Baertschiger and held his arms up.

"That kind of put things in a precarious position," Baertschiger said. "We were in the middle of negotiations on it."

When a final round of negotiations between Bentz and staff from the governor's office failed hours later — Democrats said Bentz was offering poison pills, Republicans said Democrats were not open to compromise — the 11 Republican senators left the state.

#### Too few votes for carbon bill

The thing is, Courtney wasn't sure the bill had the votes anyway. To get the bill out of committee he had to temporarily replace a member and vote it out himself.

"I thought at the time if we got it on the floor we had a chance to get it passed. I wasn't sure," Courtney said.

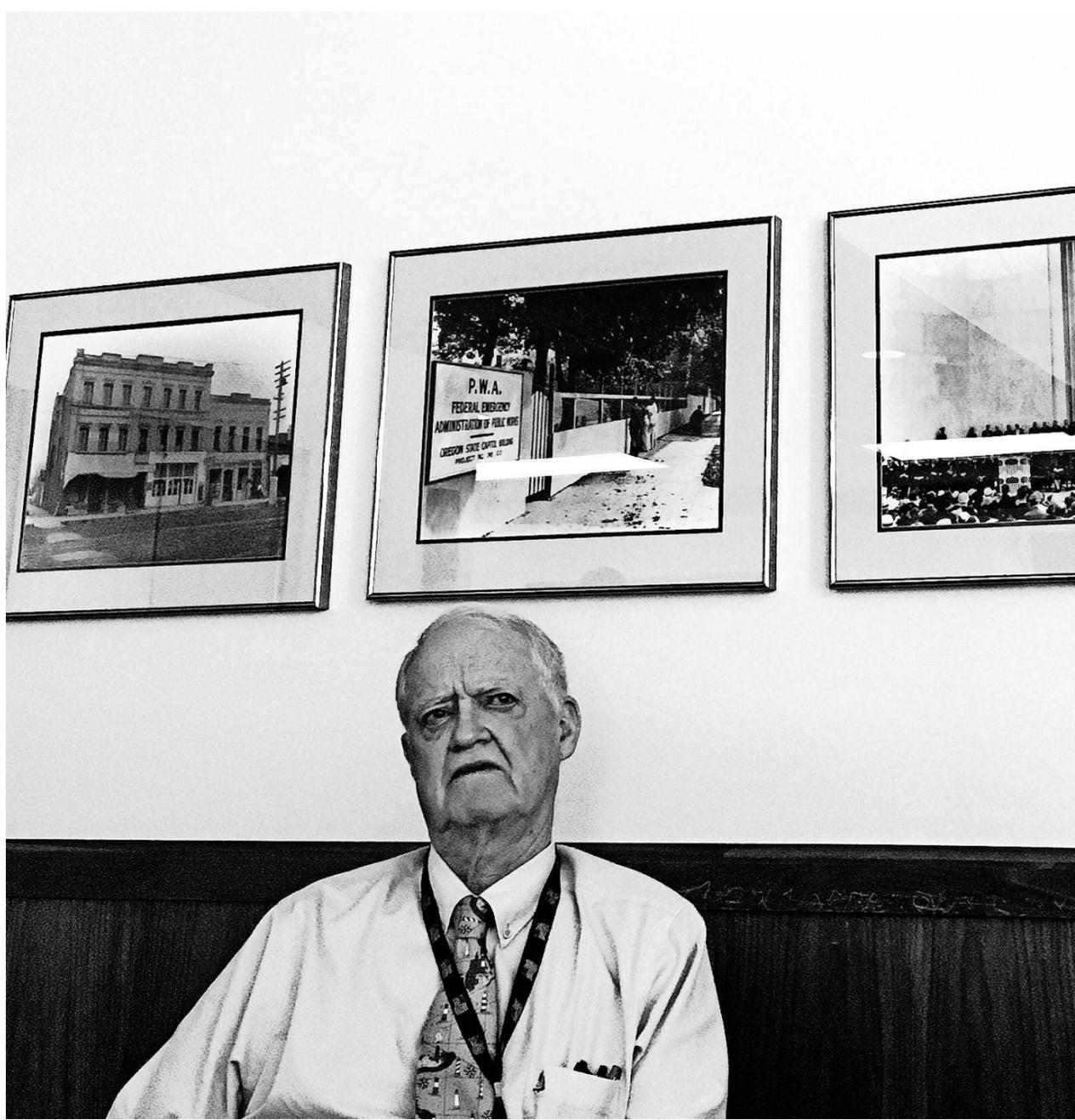
Republicans, meanwhile, were asking him to guarantee it would be on the floor. But he wouldn't, so they walked.

At some point between voting it out of committee and June 25, Courtney became convinced it didn't have the votes to pass. Three Democrats were assured "no" votes.

"The more I talked to them, I said: 'Oh my God, this isn't going to make it,'" Courtney said.

On June 25, he announced on the Senate floor the cap-and-trade bill lacked enough votes and was effectively dead.

Baertschiger returned to Oregon on June 26 to continue negotiations to



Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, speaks to the media from his office in the Oregon State Capitol Building in Salem June 28. Senate Republicans announced Friday that they would return to the Capitol on Saturday, ending their walkout at nine days. The Senate had at least 130 bills to pass upon their return, including budget bills for state agencies and some top proposals from Democratic leadership.

bring Republicans back. All but two of the 11 Republicans who walked out in June ended up returning so the Senate could pass around 130 bills in the final two days before adjournment.

"We returned so we could finish the job that we were elected to do," Baertschiger said. "We didn't walk out to kill all 130 bills. We walked out to kill one

bill." But the greenhouse gas emissions bill will be back, maybe as soon as February 2020.

"We ain't doing nothing else big," Courtney said. "We tend to misjudge that February session every damn time. That carbon bill has got to be ready to go on day one. It's got to come out of the

Senate in five seconds. "I know what's going to happen: vaccinations and guns and I'm going to have to say 'no!'" Courtney said. "We're doing this one thing."

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