



April 5, 2013

Board members tell Senate committee guns in schools should be local decision

Before a packed hearing room on April 5, OSBA board members testified in favor of giving local school boards and districts the ability to determine whether guns should be allowed in K-12 schools. Currently, non-employees who hold a license to carry a concealed weapon may not be restricted from bringing their firearm into school buildings or onto school grounds.

The Senate Judiciary Committee held a public hearing on **Senate Bill 347**, which would create a statewide prohibition on possessing or carrying firearms in public schools. The legislation would allow a school district board to "opt out" of the statewide ban and set firearms policy at the local level.

Bobbie Regan, a Portland Public Schools Board member and secretary-treasurer of the OSBA Board, emphasized the local control aspect of the bill. "As an OSBA Board member, I interact with many rural and suburban school board members," she said. "They tell me that what's good for Portland is not always good for their school district." She also told legislators that Portland schools already have a policy prohibiting guns on school property, but it is unenforceable when citizens have a valid concealed weapon permit.

Samuel Lee III, a member of the Winston-Dillard School Board and OSBA Board, explained that he is a gun owner and member of the National Rifle Association. "In our county, firearms are as common as pickup trucks...school safety is and should remain a local issue," he said. While not supporting new laws restricting gun rights, Lee told the committee that rural schools might have to wait up to an hour for law enforcement to respond in an emergency and districts in his area should be able to determine how best to keep their students safe.

Stanley Primozich, a member of the McMinnville School Board and OSBA Board, said he is not opposed to firearms ownership, but that local districts "should be able to control" guns on campus. He shared a story of a parent who had a concealed weapon permit and openly carried his firearm into school buildings, alarming parents and teachers and disrupting the learning environment for students.

OSBA Executive Director Betsy Miller-Jones ended the testimony by noting that "...for school board members this is not about gun control – this is about local control."



Bobbie Regan, Stanley Primozich and Betsy Miller-Jones testify in favor of local control during a hearing on Senate Bill 347 on Friday. Samuel Lee III (at left, front row) also joined them in testifying.

Committee Chair Floyd Prozanski (D-Eugene) said that SB 347 would be scheduled for a vote next week.

If you have questions, contact Morgan Allen at mallen@osba.org.

View SB 347:

<http://www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Legislative/BillTracking.aspx?s=13&t=&r=&q=347&c=50&key=SB%2003470&ptadd=:%20SB%200347%20Details>

Links to other gun-related bills considered at the hearing can be found at: <https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2013R1/Committees/SJUD/2013-04-05-08-30/Agenda>

Senate takes first step to overturn ban on Native American mascots

In 2012, after almost six years of consideration and debate, the Oregon State Board of Education voted to ban the use of Native American mascots in public schools by July 2017. To enforce the ban, the State Board included a provision that State School Fund (SSF) payments could be withheld until the use of the mascot was discontinued by the district. In response, legislators have introduced several bills to overturn the decision of the State Board or end the ban outright.

On April 4, the Senate Education and General Government committee voted 5-0 to send **Senate Bill 215** to a vote of the full Senate. As amended, the bill would allow the use of a mascot associated with a Native American tribe if: "An agreement has been entered into by the entity using the mascot and the governing body of the

federally recognized Native American tribe in Oregon that is located closest to the entity using the mascot.” In sum, if a school district gets permission from the tribe, it can keep its mascot.

On April 3, the House Education Committee held a public hearing on a similar bill, **House Bill 3397**. The committee heard testimony from opponents of the ban who argued that the decision to use mascots should be made at the local school district level. Justin Martin, a lobbyist for and member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, told legislators that their members oppose the ban and believe that an agreement to use the mascot helps foster dialogue and communication about the history of native peoples. He added that the decision to use a mascot should be a decision made at the local level by the school board and district.

Supporters of the ban argued just as passionately that the use of tribal mascots does psychological damage to Native American students and exposes all schoolchildren to negative racial stereotypes. Brenda Frank, a member of the Klamath tribe and chair of the State Board of Education when it imposed the ban, said that “the best research...tells you that race-based mascots are wrong. They’re just outright wrong.”

The Senate is expected to take swift action on SB 215. Contact Morgan Allen at mallen@osba.org for more information.

View SB 215:

<http://www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Legislative/BillTracking.aspx?s=13&t=&r=&q=215&c=50&key=SB%2002150&ptadd=:%20SB%200215%20Details>

View HB 3397:

<http://www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Legislative/BillTracking.aspx?s=13&t=&r=&q=3397&c=50&key=HB%2033970&ptadd=:%20HB%203397%20Details>

Co-Chairs’ PERS plan to be voted on by Senate and House

Senate Bill 822, the Co-Chairs’ plan for making modifications in the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS), was approved this week by the full Ways and Means committee on strict party-line vote with all Democrats in support and all Republicans in opposition.

Sen. Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day) opposed the plan, stating, “We can do better, we have to do better. A broad coalition of Oregon’s governments, schools, editorial boards and citizens believe that we need bold PERS reform, and this falls short. This Legislature has an opportunity to do something collaborative and visionary for PERS. This is more symbol than substance.”

SB 822 will produce a little over \$800 million in savings across the entire system in the 2013-15 biennium, accomplished through:

- Creating a cap on the Cost-of-Living-Adjustment (COLA) for retirees (\$400 million);

- Eliminating the state tax remedy for out-of state retirees (\$55 million);
- Deferring into future years parts of the anticipated rate increase for employers (\$350 million).

“We appreciate the Co-Chairs’ willingness to discuss and propose reforms to PERS,” OSBA Deputy Executive Director Jim Green commented. “The COLA cap is necessary to reduce growing costs in the system. Elimination of the tax remedy for people who do not even live in Oregon, or even pay tax in Oregon, is only common sense. Deferring payments in the system does not make sense. In the long run, it will cost more and is not a prudent business model for PERS.”

Public employee unions have stated they do not support SB 822 and believe that portions of the bill will ultimately be found unconstitutional by the Oregon Supreme Court. At one point, Rep. Peter Buckley (D-Ashland), one of the Co-Chairs, stated, “I think we have united the whole state in dislike of our proposal.”

SB 822 now goes to the Senate for a vote sometime next week. If adopted by the Senate, the bill heads to the House for consideration.

If you have questions regarding SB 822, contact Jim Green at jgreen@osba.org.

View SB 822:

<http://www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Legislative/BillTracking.aspx?s=13&t=&r=&q=822&c=50&key=SB%2008220&ptadd=:%20SB%200822%20Details>

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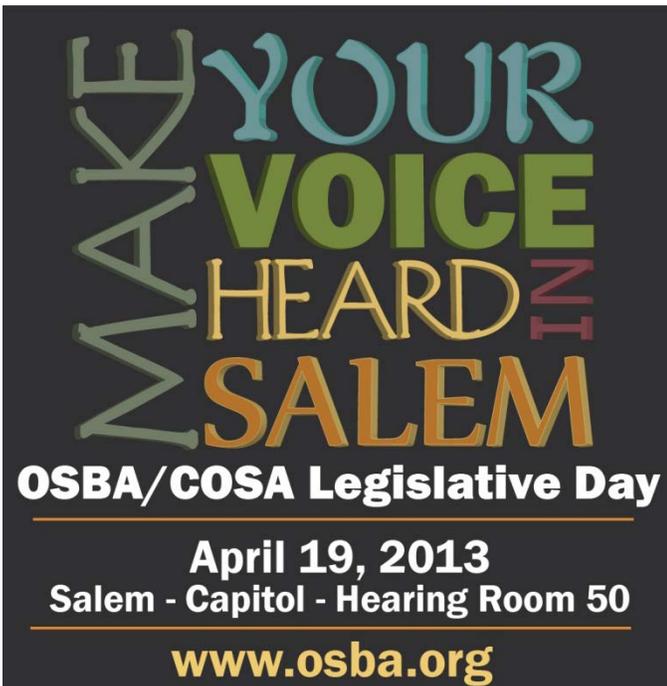
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Contact your legislator

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- House - <http://www.leg.state.or.us/house/>
- Senate - <http://www.leg.state.or.us/senate/>

To contact your legislator by phone, call the Capitol Switchboard at 1-800-332-2313.



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OSBA/COSA Legislative Day

April 19, 2013
Salem - Capitol - Hearing Room 50

www.osba.org



PACE DAY

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Register online at www.osba.org