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OREGON STATE REPRESENTATIVE NEWS FROM MIKE NEARMAN

We want to stay safe and the hand of government intervenes as makes things worse.

Hello fellow Oregonians,

The First Special Session of 2020 is over. This session was called by Governor Brown for the purposes of addressing issues with law enforcement in the wake of Black Lives Matter riots and for changes in the law required by the government response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

I believe that nearly all our law enforcement officers value justice and embody practices that reflect that. I believe that when we employ law enforcement professionals and give them the legal and physical tools to use force against people in our community, it's appropriate that we hold them to a higher standard, which we do. When law enforcement officers make a mistake, it is my experience that these mistakes are publicly, swiftly and satisfactorily resolved.

I worry that law enforcement agencies will be less and less able to attract and hire quality new officers to protect the community. I also worry that officers in the field, under pressure, will make decisions based on protecting themselves legally and not protecting the community. I very much appreciate the work that law enforcement does, but who would want to be a police officer today? Would you want your son or daughter, grandson or granddaughter to be a police officer?

This special session left us less safe.

The state's response to the COVID-19 outbreak has been too heavy-handed. Back in March, I was happy to have the Governor do what she thought was necessary to respond to this outbreak of unknown severity. We were told that we needed to flatten the curve. Now we're faced with more problems caused by the government's response to the outbreak than from the virus itself. As they say, the cure was worse than the cause.

I feel helpless as my email box fills up with stories of families who want their kids to return to school, other families who depend on the income from a small business that is crippled by government rules, and other families who are unable to visit relatives, attend funerals or graduations. These are the things that make life worth living. Right now, in Oregon, your chance of having died from COVID-19 is one in twenty-one thousand four hundred and eleven.

We spent the special session passing bills so that government could manage better during an outbreak. I would have been happier if we passed more bills that let the citizens manage better.

This special session left our lives less enriched.

This special session is a great example of how we want to stay safe – whether by the positive work of law enforcement or from the ill effects of a virus – and the hand of government intervenes as makes things worse.

Stay tuned for another special session in less than a month to work on cutting the budget.

Yours truly,

Representative Mike Nearman

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