



**Lawmakers Consider  
Laws Targeting  
Guns, Sex-Ed, Vaping  
and More  
A4 & A5**

# NISQUALLY VALLEY NEWS



\$100

**Inclusivity Celebrated at  
Basketball Tourney  
A8**

Thursday, January 30, 2020 • www.yelmonline.com



## Yelm Lineman to Continue Football Career at the UW

**BY ERIC ROSANE**  
erosane@yelmonline.com

Senior Yelm High School lineman Bradley McGannon announced Monday afternoon his intent to play football at the University of Washington.

“I am beyond excited to play for a hometown team that I have watched and supported since I was a kid,” McGannon said in a post on Twitter. “I especially want to thank my high school head football coach, Coach (Jason) Ronquillo, who was a huge help throughout my high school career and the recruiting process! Now

it’s time to go be a DAWG.” McGannon plans to join the team as a walk-on member of the roster.

McGannon’s announcement comes after multiple trips to Seattle, including a visit to a game

■ SEE **LINEMAN**, PAGE A10



Bradley McGannon, seen here in an image provided by the University of Washington, was a big factor in Yelm’s success on the football field the last two seasons.

**Legislature  
2020**

## Lawmakers Hear Pitch to Replace Gas Tax With a Fee Per Mile Driven

**BY CAMERON SHEPPARD**  
For Nisqually Valley News

Washington state lawmakers will consider a gradual transition from the state’s current gasoline tax to a system that would charge drivers fees based on how many miles they travel.

This comes amid rising concerns over the amount of revenue available to fund transportation and the maintenance of roads and highways due to increasing fuel-efficiency among vehicles, as well as concerns that owners of older and less fuel-efficient vehicles are carrying a larger tax burden.

The House Transportation Committee heard a report Thursday, Jan. 23, from the Washington State Transportation Commission on the feasibility and logistics of a road usage charge program.

Reema Griffith, executive director of the Washington State Transportation Commis-

■ SEE **FEE**, PAGE A10

## Threats, a Challenger and Business as Usual for House Leader Wilcox



Jared Wenzelburger / jwenzelburger@yelmonline.com

House Minority Leader J.T. Wilcox, R-Yelm, speaks with a Nisqually Valley News reporter during an interview at his office on the capitol campus last week. Wilcox stands by his decision to suspend state Rep. Matt Shea from the House Republican Caucus.

### Republican Lawmaker From Yelm Stands by Decision to Boot State Rep. Matt Shea From Caucus Over ‘Domestic Terrorism’ Findings

**BY ERIC ROSANE**  
erosane@yelmonline.com

Washington House Minority Leader J.T. Wilcox’s decision late last year to oust an Eastern Washington lawmaker from the Republican Caucus and call for his resignation over findings linking him to “domestic terrorism” have been largely accepted by fellow members of the Legislature, but he certainly isn’t without ardent detractors.

In the weeks since announcing the action against state Rep. Matt Shea, R-Spokane Valley, Wilcox has been the target of online threats and has seen the emergence of a political challenger highly critical of the Legislature’s overall treatment of Shea.

He says all the commotion hasn’t had an effect on how he carries out his leadership duties in Olympia.

“It hasn’t changed anything that I do,” said Wilcox, R-Yelm, who represents the 2nd Legislative District, in an interview with the Nisqually Valley News last week in Olympia.

Wilcox said previously the online comments involved “public execution and ropes.”

Besides notifying his wife’s employer of threatening comments and the subsequent inves-

tigation conducted by the Washington State Patrol, Wilcox said he and his family have been unphased by the threats, which the state patrol reported came from a Facebook page connected to a gun rally at the Capitol on Jan. 17.

The threats in question were posted on the Facebook page of the Washington Three Percenters, a group founded by Matt Marshall, who has announced that he will be pursuing the 2nd Legislative District seat currently held by the house speaker.

Marshall strongly denounced the threats in an interview with Nisqually Valley News and noted they were not made by someone associated with his organization. “It’s a public space and doesn’t reflect any thoughts from our members,” Marshall said. “I don’t think it’s OK to make threats against anybody.”

Marshall, also a member of the Eatonville School Board, has been one of Wilcox’s most vocal critics when it comes to Shea. He said Wilcox has divided the Republican Party.

“I think the thing that makes people the most upset is the lack of due process,” Marshall said.

In early December, Wilcox

■ SEE **WILCOX**, PAGE A10



Rep. Matt Shea



Matt Marshall

Subscriber mailing label below this line

Follow Us on Facebook  
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/NISQUALLYVALLEYNEWS



**We love being your bank!**  
For home, construction, business...or just a smile.

**MOBILE & ONLINE, TOO!**

**timberlandbank.com**

**800.562.8761**

Member FDIC

**Timberland Bank**  
Since 1915

**WILCOX:**

*Continued From Page A1*

removed Shea from the caucus, took away all his committee assignments and called for his resignation following the publication of findings from an independent investigation by the Rampart Group that accused Shea of taking part in “domestic terrorism.”

The accusations were linked to his alleged involvement in three armed standoffs, including 2016’s Malheur National Wildlife Refuge takeover. The investigation found that he was a leader in the Patriot Movement and has close ties to militia groups.

“Representative Shea participated in act of domestic terrorism against the United States by his actions before and during the armed takeover and standoff at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge,” the report on the investigation reads.

Shea, who says he has no plans to resign, adamantly denied the accusations against him in an op-ed published in three newspapers owned by Free Press Publishing in Eastern Washington this week.

“I have been falsely accused of being a ‘domestic terrorist’ by a private investigator who never spoke to the principals involved in the incidents she described and relied instead on anonymous sources,” he wrote. “Based solely on this investigator’s dossier, the Speaker of the House said I ‘engaged in domestic terrorism.’ This is a lie.”

Shea went on to write that if Wilcox believed him to be a domestic terrorist, he said the investigator should “respect the ability and proper role of prosecutors and federal law enforcement to make a charging decision.”

“Elected officials who casually accuse others of crimes without waiting for prosecutors to charge (much less juries convict), all with an eye towards overturning the results of elections they disagree with, are an ugly and corrosive feature of our modern political landscape,” Shea wrote.

(His full commentary and a copy of the Rampart report can be found along with this story at [yelmonline.com](http://yelmonline.com).)

Wilcox said there are no plans to reinstate Shea back into the House Republican Caucus. Though Shea has declared his innocence, Wilcox said one significant reason for his decision to oust him was because he did not cooperate with the investigation.



Jared Wenzelburger / [jwenzelburger@yelmonline.com](mailto:jwenzelburger@yelmonline.com)

House Minority Leader J.T. Wilcox talks about items hanging on his wall from throughout the 2nd Legislative District.

“He, despite many opportunities, never had any communication with the investigators. So the report doesn’t include things that he might have said or people that he might have recommended they talk to,” Wilcox said. “The reason I made it a suspension is because I wanted to leave room for him to refute. If anybody is able to prove the serious allegations wrong, then we’d have to rethink. But at this point, none of that’s happening.”

Despite the claims against Shea, and the league of supporters that have emerged calling for a “fair trial” for the 4th Legislative District representative, he’s still largely able to do his day-to-day work, Wilcox said.

“I feel very strongly that anybody who is still an elected representative has the right to speak on the floor and has the right to sponsor amendments. And I have resisted any efforts to take that away and I would do that for any member of the minorities, whether they’re part of my caucus or not,” he said.

Wilcox also said being without a caucus or committee assignments shouldn’t hinder Shea’s ability to perform his duties.

“It’s my job as leader to make



Cameron Sheppard / WNP

State Rep. Matt Shea speaks to supporters at a gun rights rally in Olympia earlier this month.

decisions and I don’t demand that everybody agree with me. I think a strong majority of my caucus is in agreement, but we can accommodate those who might feel differently,” he said.

As for other legislative matters, Wilcox said he is focused on accomplishing the caucus’s agenda and preventing Democrats from imposing stringent new gun laws.

Senate Bill 6077, which would ban large-capacity gun magazines, and Senate Bill 6294,

which would require training for concealed pistol licenses, were both the focus of public testimony last week.

The debate over gun laws intensified following the recent shooting in downtown Seattle that left six injured and one woman dead.

“Using that Seattle incident as a justification for gun control seems crazy to me,” Wilcox said. “These were people who, between them, were arrested more than 50 times, convicted on a number of

felonies. They’re not law-abiding gun owners — these are outlaws, and of course they’re going to ignore anything we do legislatively.”

Wilcox noted the House Republicans are also working on a major fix to the state’s transportation budget that would help implement the \$30 car tab initiative, I-976. He said there’s a proposal on the table that would move tax revenue from vehicle sales taxes from the general fund to the transportation budget.

**FEE:**

*Continued From Page A1*

sion, said “not everyone is paying their fair share for use of the roads.”

Griffith said drivers whose cars average fewer than 20 miles-per-gallon fuel efficiency could be paying up to five cents in taxes for every mile they drive, while drivers whose cars get more than 20 miles-per-gallon could be paying as little as one penny.

She said the current gas tax system creates a situation in which the vehicle you can afford, or what your lifestyle allows, determines how much you pay when traveling.

“Taxing gallons does have fairness and equity challenges,” Griffith asserted.

Griffith said the Transportation Commission recommends a slow transition from the current gas tax to the road usage charge over the next 10 years with the old and new tax systems running parallel to each other initially. She said while collection of the per mile fees will be more costly than collection of the gas tax, which drivers pay at the pump, the net revenue from the road usage charge will exceed that provided by the gas tax.

The transportation commission conducted a pilot test with a diverse range of drivers in the state who drove a collective 15 million miles during the pilot program and paid a rate of 2.4 cents per mile driven.

Multiple methods of measuring miles driven were tested, including odometer measurements reported quarterly, a smartphone app, permits that allow for a specific block or number of miles to be driven, and plug-in devices that operate both with and with-

out GPS.

Griffith said surveys and focus groups done with test drivers indicated that privacy was one of their greatest concerns. She said 47 percent of pilot program participants did not want GPS to be used to track their vehicle.

The commission’s report estimated that under the road usage charge, owners of less fuel efficient vehicles will likely pay less and hybrid/electric vehicle owners who drive more than 12,000 miles per year could end up paying more than they currently do.

Rep. Andrew Barkis, R-Olympia, expressed concerns that implementation of the road usage charge could shift the equity disparity burden to owners of vehicles with higher fuel efficiency, which might disincentivize people to purchase hybrid and electric vehicles.

...

*Cameron Sheppard is reporting from the WNP News Bureau in Olympia.*

**LINEMAN:**

*Continued From Page A1*

last October.

The two-way senior lineman received several offers from schools such as Western Oregon, Central Washington, Simon Fraser and Southwest Minnesota State.

McGannon was one of the seniors who helped lead the Tornados to school history as they made their second-consecutive state appearance last season. Yelm has only appeared in the state playoffs three times.

Yelm was formidable in the South Sound Conference last season, going 6-1 without any losses at home against league opposition.

His senior year, McGannon was also put to use in the backfield, scoring five rushing touchdowns. The 6-foot-4 senior also had three forced fumbles, four sacks and 51 tackles. He also blocked a field goal.

Over the last two years, McGannon has had more than 90 tackles.

McGannon was named the South Sound Conference’s “Line-man of the Year” for the 2019-2020 season.

**D&D COMPUTER • JEWELRY**

SAY: "AHH..."

See Us Today!

**We're Your VIRUS REMOVAL SPECIALIST**

Providing Professional Service for 18+ Years.

Best of NISQUALLY

**Upgrades • Repairs • Parts Network Services • Custom Systems**

**Call Dan 360-458-2993**

Hours: Tues.-Wed. 10-7 Thurs.-Sat. 10-6 Sun.-Mon. closed

205 N 1st Street In The Mini Mall

VISA MasterCard

• Toys • Books • Games • Gifts • Decor • Collectibles

**FUNTIME TOYS & GIFTS**

You Can Also Order From [www.funtime toys and gifts.com](http://www.funtime toys and gifts.com) And Pick Up In Store!

303 First St. S, Suite 3 Yelm, WA 360-557-4648 [www.funtime toys and gifts.com](http://www.funtime toys and gifts.com)

Find us on Facebook