

# CAMAS-WASHOUGAL POST-RECORD

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO COURTESY OF THE EAST CLARK PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS UNION

Camas-Washougal Fire Department Fire Captain Katie Linton receives her second COVID-19 vaccination on Jan. 12, 2021.

## State expands vaccine eligibility

Local first responders receive vaccines; Fairgrounds to be mass vaccination site

By **KELLY MOYER**  
Post-Record editor

Governor Jay Inslee announced this week that the state is expanding its Phase 1B COVID-19 vaccine eligibility to include any Washingtonian age 65 or older, as well as those age 50 and older who are living in multi-generational households.

The move expanded vaccine eligibility, starting Monday, Jan. 18, to 1.5 million Washingtonians, including high-risk health care workers, first responders and residents and staff at long-term care facilities included in the state's first phase of COVID-19 inoculations.

At a virtual press conference held Jan. 18, the governor noted 80 percent

of all COVID-19 deaths in Washington have been among those age 65 and older, and said many of the communities disproportionately impacted by the coronavirus also live in multigenerational households, so the move should "make it possible for more people in higher-risk categories to get vaccines."

The state's first vaccination phase, 1A, included high-risk health care workers, as well as first responders. East County Fire and Rescue Fire Chief

Mike Carnes said in early January that his crew was in the process of getting vaccinated and that he himself was scheduled to receive his second COVID-19 vaccine by the end of the month.

"The county has done a great job with fire and EMS, keeping everyone in the loop and keeping people well-informed about the vaccines," Carnes said. "It's going as well as anybody could expect."

Likewise, Kevin Bergstrom, president of the

East Clark Professional Fire Fighters union that represents ECFR and Camas-Washougal Fire Department firefighters, said nearly 90 percent of local firefighters — who also serve as emergency medical responders — have received their first COVID-19 vaccine.

Although there are now 1.5 million Washingtonians eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, state leaders cautioned the

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## 'PEOPLE WON'T EVEN RECOGNIZE CAMAS SCHOOLS IF THESE LEVIES DON'T PASS'



A sign supporting two Camas School District replacement levies is attached to a fence at Crown Park in Camas on Sunday, Jan. 17, 2021.

## Voters to decide fate of Camas school levies in Feb. 9 special election

By **KELLY MOYER**  
Post-Record editor

Camas School District voters will soon decide the fate of two replacement levies supporters say are critical to the future of the school district.

Ballots for the Feb. 9 special election will arrive in Camas voters' mailboxes by Jan. 27. At stake is the future of the school district's Educational Programs and Operations (EP&O) levy and a Technology, Health, and Safety capital levy. If voters approve their renewal, the three-year levies will replace current levies expiring at the end of 2021.

Decision will impact Camas School District's class sizes, athletics, extracurriculars, special education, building upkeep, school nurses

In November 2020, Camas School Board members agreed to place the replacement levies on the Feb. 9 ballot.

"Families expect a high level of service and (the levies are) what help fund that," board member Corey McEnry said then. "Really, the levies are the reason we can

offer what we can offer in Camas."

The levies represent nearly 20 percent of the school district's funding.

The district uses its EP&O levy funds to supplement staff and programs not funded by state revenues — hiring teachers to help reduce Camas' class sizes, offering extracurricular activities and athletics programs, and greatly supplementing the district's school special education programs, libraries, nursing staff and transportation and food services.

Jasen McEathron, the school district's director of business services and operations, reminded school board members

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## Some fall sports resume Feb. 1

Cross country, golf, tennis OK; higher-risk sports must wait

By **DOUG FLANAGAN**  
Post-Record staff writer

Camas and Washougal high school runners, golfers and tennis players will return to competition in February, but the rest of the traditional fall sports athletes will have to wait a bit longer to find out when their seasons will begin.

Greater St. Helens League athletic directors announced last week that their schools' cross country, boys golf and boys tennis teams can start practices Feb. 1, with competition beginning the following week even if the Southwest Region remains in Phase 1 of the state's "Healthy Washington" reopening plan.

"It will be nice to be out on the courts," said Camas boys tennis coach Jonathan Burton. "We will be working to minimize (virus transmission) risk to players and coaches. Tennis is a great social-distancing sport. We will be working to develop other safeguards to keep the team safe. The weather will be an issue for us, but we are all looking forward to playing tennis."

Washington's Department of Health guidelines stipulate that all athletes must wear masks during competitions.

"We know things will be different, but the chance to do what we love will stay the same," said Washougal cross country coach Tracey Stinchfield. "We are extremely excited to have a chance to really

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## Clark County Republican Women condemn Herrera Beutler for vote

Republican congresswoman voted to impeach Trump, said 'president incited a riot aiming to halt peaceful transfer of power' during Jan. 6 attack on Capitol

By **KELLY MOYER**  
Post-Record editor

The Clark County Republican Women's group is condemning Republican Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler for her role in the second impeachment of Donald Trump.

Herrera Beutler, who represents Washington's Third Congressional District, which includes Clark County, was one of 10 Re-

publican House members to vote in favor of Trump's impeachment on Jan. 13.

In a statement, Herrera Beutler said she believed Trump deserved to be impeached for his role in a Jan. 6 riot at the Capitol building that left five people dead, including a Capitol police officer who was alleged beaten over the head with a fire extinguisher during a pro-Trump mob's seige on the Capitol building.

"The President of the United States incited a riot aiming to halt the peaceful transfer of power from one administration to the next," Herrera Beutler stated. "People everywhere watched in disbelief as the center of American democracy was assaulted. The violent mob bludgeoned to death a Capitol police officer as they defaced symbols of our freedom. These terrorists roamed the Capitol, hunting the Vice President and the Speaker of the House." "Hours went by before the President did anything



Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler

meaningful to stop the attack," Herrera Beutler added. "Instead, he and his lawyer were busy making calls to senators who were still in lockdown, seeking their support to further delay the Electoral College certification."

Herrera Beutler added that House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy described "pleading with the President to go on television and call for an end to the mayhem, to no avail."

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Pickleball's recent popularity is straining Washougal courts  
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Washougal READS highlights 'The Hate U Give'  
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# Election:

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in November 2020 that it is not legal for districts to use state funds to pay for athletics, so Camas has traditionally relied on supplemental funding, including the EP&O levy, to pay for coaching staff and athletics-related costs.

Likewise, the replacement capital/technology levy helps fund things that are not covered by state or federal revenues, such as technology for staff and students and building needs, including roofs, boilers and fire protection.

The EP&O levy would keep the district's 2021 rate of \$2.50 per \$1,000 assessed property value (APV) the same for all three years of the renewal levies: 2022-24. The proposed rate for the technology-capital levy would increase from the 2021 rate of 28 cents per \$1,000 APV to 54 cents per \$1,000 APV due to the district's increased capital needs.

The school district estimates the total Camas school tax rate (levies plus bonds) will remain at the 2021 level of \$4.77 per \$1,000 APV rate in 2022, 2023 and 2024. This is because the school district's capital improvement bond will decrease from \$1.99 per \$1,000 APV in 2021 to \$1.73 per \$1,000 in 2022-24.

If approved, the three-year EP&O levy would bring the district an additional \$17.18 million in

2022, \$17.69 million in 2023 and \$18.22 million in 2024. The technology-capital levy would add \$3.71 million in 2022, \$3.82 million in 2023 and \$3.94 million in 2024.

## Getting word out 'completely different' during pandemic

Camas voters have overwhelmingly approved the school district's replacement levies in the past, with more than 68 percent of voters agreeing to pass the levy renewals in February 2017, but getting the word out about the Feb. 9 special election has not been easy during a pandemic that has kept most families away from school buildings since March 2020.

Tamara Herdener, the campaign chair for the pro-levies group, Camas Citizens for Quality Schools, said "vote yes" supporters have had to alter their information campaign this year.

"The model for getting the word out is completely different during the pandemic," Herdener said. Instead of visiting schools and meeting in-person with families and voters, pro-levy volunteers are limited to posting on social media sites, getting "Yes to Camas Schools" signs up around town and organizing small groups of sign-wavers.

The way we remind people to vote is so different because of COVID," Herdener said. "It's been



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO COURTESY OF TAMARA HERDENER

**Tamara Herdener (second from left) and her family, including her twin sons, both seniors at Camas High School, hold signs urging Camas School District voters to approve two replacement levies in the Feb. 9, 2021 special election. The levies make up nearly 20 percent of the school district's budget and help fund sports, extracurricular activities, special education programs, technology, school building maintenance, school nursing staff, accelerated learners' programs and allow the district to hire additional educators to reduce class sizes.**

challenging to get people excited about it."

The urgency of the issue, however, has remained the same, Herdener said.

"These levies are so critical to Camas — the schools and the greater community," she said. "When you look at 20 percent of the (school district's) entire budget, there is so much that would have to be cut if these levies don't pass."

Herdener said she has been trying to get one thing across to other Camas voters: "People won't even recognize Camas schools if the levies don't pass. Extra-curricular programs would be cut and canceled; buildings would go into disrepair and class sizes would go up."

Herdener said her own family, which includes

two Camas High School seniors, moved to Camas from Astoria, Oregon, in 2021. Like many local families, the Herdeners came to Camas primarily because of its storied school district.

"We came here because the schools are so great," Herdener said. "I had a woman call me to tell me that she moved her family from Florida to go to Camas schools because the school district here was so unique."

The levies, she added, are a big reason why Camas schools stand out and why the town is able to attract so many families seeking high-quality schools.

"The reality is that Camas has been so supportive of public schools. I like to tell people, even people who have been around Camas for a really long time, that people won't even recognize Camas schools if these levies don't pass," Herdener said. "Extracurricular programs would be cut, the buildings would go into disrepair, class sizes would go up."

The fear from levy supporters is that, without a school district to draw new families and businesses, the Camas community also would change for the worse.

"The ripple effect would be massive," Herdener said.

## Anti-tax activist argues 'students well served without higher taxes'

Not everyone supports the levies that have contributed to the "unique" nature of the Camas School District, however.

Local anti-tax activist Margaret Tweet, who lost her 2019 write-in bid for Camas City Council, is urging Camas School Dis-

trict voters to reject the replacement levies on Feb. 9, stating in her "against" arguments in the voters' guide, that "the current levy is generous" and that "students are well served without higher taxes."

Tweet argues state school tax rates "have dramatically increased from \$1.98 in 2017 up to \$2.85 in 2020," and that "residents have lost jobs, local businesses have lost revenue and face closure and residents have to tighten belts."

"This is not the time to raise taxes," Tweet states in her opposition arguments to both replacement levies.

Herdener, in her voter's guide response to Tweet's argument against the levies' renewal, clarifies that "yes" votes will not increase taxes.

"With renewal of Propositions 4 and 5, citizens will see an overall decrease of \$0.80 per \$1,000 assessed value in local school taxes from 2020," Herdener stated, "The overall local school tax rate for 2022-24 will remain at the 2021 level of \$4.77. The district is not raising taxes, but continuing our long-term investment."

## If levies fail, 'community would feel it more immediately than people realize'

"If the levies fail, it would mean larger class sizes, a higher student-to-teacher ratio. It's going to mean a reduction in security staff and resource officers. It will mean cutting extracurricular activities and sports. We would have to reduce and potentially eliminate our highly capable and accelerated programs. Staff and materials for special education would be drasti-

cally reduced," Herdener said. "We would have to lay off a lot of our technology and support staff and reduce professional development for staff. The grounds maintenance, building maintenance — a lot of the things that go toward the upkeep of the buildings, that keep the boilers going, would be impacted. We would visibly see things start to go into disrepair."

If voters fail to replace the levies in February, the school district would try to pass the levies again in April. If voters shoot them down a second time, the changes would happen quickly, Herdener said.

"The community would feel it more immediately than people realize," she said. "The kids will still come to school, the buses will still run ... but the sports, the drama programs, all of the things that have created such a beautiful community spirit in Camas, would not be the same."

Rory Oster, the Camas School District's athletic director, agreed that the levies are critical to funding the district's vaunted athletics program.

In a testimonial published on the "Vote Yes Camas" website, Oster credited the community's support for levies like the ones on the Feb. 9 ballot.

"Yes, we do have the greatest athletic programs in the state of Washington, and that is because Camas has always voted 'yes,'" Oster stated. "With another 'yes' vote, we will continue to provide the next wave of Papermakers with the same top-rated programs our students, staff and community has come to know."

If the levies do not pass in 2021, the district would need to layoff educators and support staff. One area that would be impacted is the school district's nursing staff. Current state funding allows Camas to pay for 1.175 full-time equivalent (FTE) school nurses to cover its 12 schools. The supplemental levies allow the district to hire 9.5 FTE school nurses.

"Even the 9.5 nurses we have now will be extremely challenging" once more students return for in-person learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, Herdener said, adding: "It would be a real blow to Camas to go through COVID and then not have these levies pass. It would be devastating."

The levies need a simple majority to pass. Ballots are being mailed on Friday, Jan. 22, and must be postmarked by Feb. 9 or deposited into an official ballot drop box by 8 p.m. Feb. 9.

To learn more about the replacement levies (Propositions 4 and 5 on the Feb. 9 ballot), visit [camas.wednet.edu/about-csd/budget-funding/levies](http://camas.wednet.edu/about-csd/budget-funding/levies). To read arguments against the levies' renewal, visit [SchoolTaxInfo.com](http://SchoolTaxInfo.com). To learn more about Camas Citizens for Quality Schools, visit [voteyescamas.org](http://voteyescamas.org).

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## Impeach:

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"The President attacked Vice President Mike Pence on Twitter while Pence was in a secure room, having fled from the mob that breached the Senate floor threatening to hang him," Herrera Beutler added. "Finally, the President released a pathetic denunciation of the violence that also served as a wink and nod to those who perpetuated it: 'I love you,' he said to them, 'you are special.'"

Herrera Beutler said she believed the president's actions were impeachable based on "indisputable evidence" and that, while she understood the argument some Republicans made, "that the best course is not to further inflame the country or alienate Republican voters," she believed Republicans would be best

served by impeaching the president.

"I believe in our Constitution, individual liberty, free markets, charity, life, justice, peace and this exceptional country," Herrera Beutler said. "I see that my own party will be best served when those among us choose truth. I believe President Trump acted against his oath of office, so I will vote to impeach him."

Following the congresswoman's statement, the Clark County Republican Women condemned Herrera Beutler's plans to impeach the president, stating that if Herrera Beutler voted to impeach (which she did on Jan. 13), she would be showing "a complete disregard to the citizens who elected (her) in the Third Congressional District of Washington."

"If you cast this vote to impeach, you will never receive our support or votes again at any time in the future," the group told Her-

rera Beutler. "Additionally, we will do everything in our power as the largest Republican Women's organization in Washington state to recruit and elect a conservative candidate who will represent our values."

The group said its "entire membership" condemned Herrera Beutler's "actions to betray a sitting Republican president" and that her vote "will never be forgotten" as it was "a personal affront to the 70 million-plus Americans who voted" for Trump.

Clark County Republican Women is a 71-year-old organization. Former Republican state legislator Liz Pike, of Camas, is the group's president. Liz Cline is the group's vice president. Anna Miller, also of Camas, acts as the group's membership secretary, and Nicole Wubben is the group's treasurer. To learn more about the group, visit [clarkcountyrepwomen.org](http://clarkcountyrepwomen.org).