

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I am Casey Dolan with local news and commentary for Friday, April 12, 2024.

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The Port Angeles School District has announced that all Port Angeles schools will continue to be closed today due to the district's ongoing paraeducator strike. This is their fifth straight day of closure. The strike has delayed the return to classes after the weeklong spring break and will extend the last day of school to at least June 20. The District and the Port Angeles Paraeducator Association failed to reach an agreement at yesterday's bargaining table, despite the district's current proposal, which provides paraeducators with approximately \$225,000 in salary and benefit increases for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years. The district has filed a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction in Clallam County Superior Court to force members of the Paraeducators Association back to work. Judge Simon Barnhart has scheduled a motion hearing for 1:30pm April 26.

According to the *Peninsula Daily News*, about 130 people showed up at a rally in Shane Park yesterday in support of the paraeducators. State Senator Emily Randall of Bremerton, who is competing in this fall's race for the 6th Congressional District seat being vacated by Rep. Derek Kilmer, spoke out in support of the striking workers, saying her mother worked as a paraeducator for 22 years in South Kitsap, so she understands the role they play in education. The school district's website notes that this is a Washington State school funding issue. In the past, more than half of Washington's general fund budget was dedicated to K-12 education, but the state investment is now down to about 43%, showing a major shift in the state's financial priorities. A look at the *US News and World Reports* state education rankings tells us that, indeed, while Washington State is ranked Number 2 for higher education, our K-12 education is ranked a low 31 out of 50.

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The *Peninsula Daily News* reports that Jefferson County Commissioners have unanimously approved a one-year moratorium on land use applications for short-term rentals (STRs) in order to evaluate and potentially change existing regulations. Current permit applications will be processed by the county under the current regulations, but any additional land use permits will not be accepted. During the moratorium, existing STRs can continue to operate as normal, at least until new regulations are passed. Once new regulations are passed, the county will likely step up its enforcement of STR regulations, according to Board chair Kate Dean. County data suggests there are more than 400 unpermitted STRs in unincorporated Jefferson County. Commissioners said Monday they're concerned about potential life-safety violations and impacts to neighbors. The moratorium charges the Department of Community Development to lead a public process and draft language for a new ordinance with possible revisions to the county code. Public participation will be available at Jefferson County Planning Commission and commissioners' meetings.

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Washington's ban on the sale of large-capacity ammunition magazines briefly lapsed on Monday when Cowlitz County Superior Court Judge Gary Bashor declared it unconstitutional. Bashor's ruling blocked Washington authorities from enforcing the ban, but before firearm dealers could ramp up sales again, Supreme Court Commissioner Michael Johnston temporarily paused the ruling, barring further consideration of the case by the state Supreme Court. The decision comes in a dispute between the state and a firearms retailer – Gator's Custom Guns in Kelso – along with the business owner Walter Wentz. Gator's challenged the ban on high-capacity magazines after it went into effect in July 2022. Pete Serrano, an attorney with Silent Majority Foundation who represented Wentz, called Bashor's ruling very thorough. "I don't think he wants to get overturned," said Serrano, who is a candidate for state attorney general this year. Attorney General Bob

Ferguson said in a statement, “This law is constitutional. Today’s decision is incorrect. This law saves lives, and I will continue to defend it,” and added that every court in Washington and across the country that has considered challenges to such a ban “has either rejected that challenge or been overruled.” Washington’s ban is the subject of two other lawsuits, both pending in federal courts.

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KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us at [news@kptz.org](mailto:news@kptz.org). I’m Casey Dolan and I thank you for listening.