



State Senator Kayse Jama

Senate District 24 (D-East Portland)

Native land of Multnomah, Wasco, Cowlitz, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Bands of Chinook, Tualatin Kalapuya, Molalla, and many other tribes that made their homes along the Columbia and Willamette Rivers

FACTSHEET

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State Senator Kayse Jama Announces 2022 Legislative Agenda

1. Establishment of Universal Legal Representation

Unlike in criminal court, undocumented immigrants facing deportation in civil immigration court are not guaranteed access to an attorney. We know that access to an attorney is one of the most important factors into determining whether an immigrant will defeat their unjust deportation. Without an attorney, Oregonians with a lawful right to remain in the United States are routinely deported. Deportation destabilizes families, disrupts the economy, reduces high school graduation rates, and increases our reliance on child and social welfare programs.

Passage of this bill would stop unlawful deportations and detentions, build stability and create pathways to work authorization & economic participation for immigrants and refugees, enable family unification, and incentivize legal talent to stay within the state through partnerships with law schools in Oregon.

2. Renter Rights and Access to Cooling

Oregon renters face barriers to installing portable cooling technologies, such as landlords' ability to ban certain types of air conditioner units. In addition, Oregon lacks requirements for landlords to maintain safe temperatures for residents during heat waves.

Passage of this bill would allow a renter to install portable cooling devices that conform to applicable law and safe installation standards and are maintained in good working order. Additionally, landlords would be required to maintain safe indoor air temperatures in at least one portion of the premises.

3. In-State Tuition Eligibility for Afghan Arrivals

In the 2021 Legislative Session, Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 553 which provides that students who legally entered the United States under the Compact of Free Association treaty, those granted refugee

status by USCIS, or Special Immigrant Visa holders be eligible for exemption from nonresident tuition and fees at public universities, and are eligible to receive state and university scholarships or other financial aid. Those arriving from Afghanistan as conditional permanent residents (CPR) or humanitarian parolees, and those who are under asylum or temporary protected status (TPS) will not be covered under Senate Bill 553.

Passage of this bill would modify Senate Bill 553 to expand eligibility to those arriving from Afghanistan as humanitarian parolees, asylum, CPR or TPS.

4. Updating Immigration Terminology in Oregon State Law

Immigrants and refugees arriving in the U.S as their safe haven from either fleeing war or seeking better opportunities are forced to fit into this divisive and hurtful narrative of being an “alien.” The use of this word weaponizes systems, institutions to express bigotry and hatred without using overt racist language.

Passage of this bill would revise existing state law provisions to refer to those persons using “non-citizen” instead of the word “alien,” including a person who is not a citizen or national of the United States.

Additionally, there will be a clarification that the intent of the Legislature in enacting this measure to make only non-substantive changes that remove the dehumanizing term “alien” from all Oregon code sections. Nothing in this measure shall be interpreted to make any substantive change to existing law, including, but not limited to, eligibility for federal programs or benefits that are available to a person who meets the definition of “alien” under state or federal law.

5. Transforming Justice

Many Oregonians, especially those who identify as Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other people of color, do not feel safe in our neighborhoods, homes, and workplaces. Unnecessary interactions with law enforcement increase tension and mistrust among our communities, and barriers within our public safety system prevent success and healing.

Passage of this bill would limit unnecessary stops and arrests, remove barriers for people on probation or post-prison supervision seeking to rebuild their lives, and invest resources in communities of color.

6. Addition of Race and Ethnicity to Oregon Income Tax Form

This legislative concept would allow the Department of Revenue to collect taxpayer data on race and ethnicity so that it will be possible in the future to examine tax policy and Oregon’s current tax structure to determine distributional impacts on taxpayers disaggregated by race, particularly its impact on racial inequalities in homeownership, income, wealth, and much more. Moreover, this data will help lawmakers, researchers, and advocates understand the implications of tax policy in a way that is not possible now.

7. Access to Infertility Treatments for All Oregonians

Millions of Oregonians pay monthly premiums for insurance coverage, yet insurers are not required to cover the standard of care for infertility or for fertility preservation for medically-induced infertility.

Oregonians want quality coverage for their premium dollars. Without insurance coverage, these standard treatments are unaffordable for many patients, or patients may engage in riskier medical practices.

Passage of this bill would require coverage for fertility and reproductive endocrinology services for men and women, by amending the Reproductive Health Equity Act, to cover all aspects of reproductive health; cover in vitro fertilization and other infertility treatments, as well as fertility preservation for cancer patients and others at risk of infertility as a result of a medical condition or treatment; and expand access to coverage for all Oregonians in both the individual and group markets to provide equitable care.

8. Establishment of the Racial Equity and Justice Youth Collaborative

Racial inequities and injustice continue to occur in Oregon, and there is no designated student body responsible for specifically elevating the voice and view of Oregon's students. 40% of our students are students of color who continue to see persistent gaps in our education system.

Passage of this bill would create the Racial Equity and Justice Student Collaborative - a safe and accessible space for Oregon's Black, Indigenous and students of color, students who identify as LGBTQ2SIA+, are emerging bilingual or multilingual, navigating poverty, and/or are disabled to participate in the policymaking process at the state level. This youth collaborative will be aligned with the work of the Governor's Racial Justice Council and will focus on improving educational outcomes for students from racial and ethnic communities who have been historically and are currently underserved.

9. Restoration of Voting Rights for People in Prison

Ninety-five percent of people in prison return to their communities. Reentry can be a difficult process, but having strong ties to the community increases the chances of success. Civic engagement, specifically voting, increases the ability to reintegrate, reducing recidivism, and making communities safer. The lives of people in prison are influenced by policies made by elected officials. Those who are elected are held accountable by their constituents. Until people in prison are given the right to vote, making up the constituency, they are unable to hold elected officials accountable.

Passage of this bill would restore voting rights to currently incarcerated individuals.

10. Compensation for Oregon's Wrongfully Convicted

Wrongful convictions have dramatically impacted the lives of innocent people in Oregon. Upon release, wrongfully convicted Oregonians face a number of immediate financial challenges that impact their ability to survive after wrongful incarceration, including housing, transportation, health services and insurance, mental health treatment, and other basic needs; years of lost income and inability to save for retirement while imprisoned; and missed educational and career opportunities. Some continue to struggle with a criminal conviction on their record, despite their innocence. Currently, Oregon is one of only 14 states that does not compensate wrongfully convicted people.

Passage of this bill would provide \$65,000 per year of wrongful imprisonment, plus up to \$25,000 for years spent on parole, in post-prison supervision, or on the sex offender registry. It would also provide access to non-monetary services including counseling, housing assistance and personal financial literacy

assistance. Lastly, it would seal records associated with the wrongful arrest and conviction, and provide exonerees a certificate of innocence, so exonerees can clear their names and move on with their lives.

11. Farmworker Overtime

Farmworkers in Oregon do not have the same overtime benefits as workers in other industries. They are doing important, hard, and dangerous work in one of the largest sectors of our state's economy and have worked to feed Oregon families through a pandemic, catastrophic fires, hazardous air quality levels, and dangerous heat waves. Many acknowledge that farmworkers are "essential workers," but they are unfairly excluded from receiving benefits they have earned.

They deserve to be paid for every hour of their essential, difficult, and often dangerous work. And yet, in 2020, while working through wildfires and ice storms, Oregon farmworkers made, on average, less than \$20,000 a year.

They deserve equal pay and the opportunity for a safe, healthy work schedule just like everyone else. Through this multi-year phased-in plan, farmworkers will finally receive the pay they deserve through passage of this bill.

12. Injured Worker Parity

Claw backs of benefits by insurance companies are crushing to workers with severe injuries. Injured workers rely on workers compensation benefits to replace their wages when they are unable to work, and to compensate them for a permanent loss of physical capacity. When the insurer announces an overpayment that accrued through no fault of the worker, and suddenly starts to claw back benefits, the worker has very limited ability to challenge or plan for those changes under the current system.

Passage of this bill would require insurers to notify injured workers when the temporary payments are ending, extend the time period for which workers can get backdated work restrictions from 14 days to 60 days after notice has been given by the insurer, provide an exception to the backdating restriction for periods where the claim is in litigation, protect workers when doctors create an overpayment of temporary payments by backdating the date the worker reached maximum improvement, and give workers and insurers the same amount of time to discover errors.

About State Senator Kayse Jama: Senator Jama represents Senate District 24 (East Portland and North Clackamas) and serves as the chair of the Senate Committee On Housing and Development. He was the first former refugee, Muslim, and Somali-American to serve in the Oregon State Senate. Before his appointment, Sen. Jama was a prominent community organizer and Executive Director of Unite Oregon.