



# OFFICE OF THE SENATE PRESIDENT

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## PRESS RELEASE

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## Legislature Wraps Up 2022 Session

SALEM – The Oregon State Legislature completed its 2022 session on Friday, March 4<sup>th</sup>.

**“The 2022 session has ended,” said Senate President Peter Courtney (D-Salem). “We worked hard. We passed a good budget. We fixed important problems. There were tough fights, but we all fought for Oregonians. The Legislature has done its most important duty: to make the state better today than it was yesterday. I think we did OK.”**

### SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES

The Legislature ended its 32-day session after approving a balanced budget and making investments in communities across Oregon. The new funding will support construction projects, services, and economic development that move Oregon forward.

The new budget also includes urgent funding to address Oregon’s homelessness and housing crises. A [\\$400 million housing package](#) will build new affordable housing and directly support local governments in providing temporary shelters and services for homeless individuals.

### INVESTING IN OREGON’S KIDS

The Legislature approved \$150 million in funding for the [2022 Summer Learning Package](#), creating new opportunities for kids to learn, play, and keep active over the summer months.

The investment, introduced by President Courtney and Senator Michael Dembrow (D-Portland), allows school districts and community organizations to repeat and expand programs—such as enrichment activities, academic learning, mental health services, and summer school—created through last year’s historic summer learning investment.

**“We have to be aggressive about education,” said President Courtney. “Our children have really been affected by this pandemic. We pushed hard for summer learning last year. Parents and teachers told us it had a big effect on kids. Summer learning has to become permanent.”**

Other important education bills passed this session will support school districts in communities hit hard by the devastating 2020 fire season, expand eligibility for the Oregon Promise grant program, [make child care more affordable](#), and [boost the state's education workforce](#) by distributing \$100 million in grants to hire new school staff and address teacher burnout.

**“This is a big step forward for our students... but we can’t stop here. The year-round school has got to come,”** said President Courtney.

## **GROWING OUR MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM**

Lawmakers worked to address gaps in the state’s behavioral health system this session, delivering investments that will make it easier for Oregonians to receive treatment.

These investments include [\\$100 million for Community Mental Health Programs](#) to increase the availability of behavioral health housing and residential treatment beds. The new funding, introduced by President Courtney, will help prevent people facing mental illness and substance abuse disorders from becoming houseless and to alleviate bottleneck issues at the state hospital.

**“Oregonians struggling with mental illness should not end up in a tent along the road,”** said President Courtney. **“We have to start dealing with homelessness from a mental health approach. This is a remarkable investment. We can make a difference in a person’s life before they end up in the Oregon State Hospital or on the street.”**

The Legislature also passed a bipartisan bill to [increase the state’s behavioral health workforce](#), delivering \$132 million in grants to raise wages for behavioral health professionals, offer retention bonuses, and recruit and hire new staff.

## **PROTECTING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE**

New [healthcare investments](#) passed this session will help keep low-income individuals and families insured and support health care workers facing burnout.

The Legislature delivered support for Oregonians who may lose Oregon Health Plan (OHP) coverage after federal pandemic protections expire. The new funding will allow OHA to delay redeterminations of OHP eligibility for individuals likely to lose their coverage due to income fluctuations. The bill will also create a new bridge health insurance program that, if approved by the federal government, will ensure Oregonians have access to health insurance while they are moved out of the state Medicaid system.

Additional investments within the passed budget will support counseling and wellness programs for nurses, and provide \$45 million in new funding to the Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) to expand programs and tuition assistance that will increase the number and diversity of health care graduates entering Oregon’s workforce.

**“Anything we can do to increase diversity in health care is good for all of Oregon. We can save lives by adding doctors and nurses all around the state,”** said President Courtney.

## **BOLSTERING OUR WORKFORCE**

Lawmakers took action this session to expand and support the state’s workforce, including:

- Passing Future Ready Oregon, a \$200 million funding package that will create new grant programs to assist underrepresented communities in accessing the training and resources needed to obtain jobs in Oregon’s construction, manufacturing, and health care sectors.
- Requiring overtime pay for farmworkers and providing a new refundable income and corporate tax credit to help farms offset the costs of paying overtime wages.
- Approval of \$600 payments to low-income workers to address the increasing cost of living and help working individuals and families afford essentials such as food, rent, and childcare. Payments will be distributed this year to Oregonians who qualified for and claimed the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) on their 2020 tax return or on their amended 2020 tax return by April 15, 2022.

## **WORKING FOR THE MID-VALLEY**

Lawmakers from the Mid-Willamette Valley, including President Courtney, pushed hard this session for new investments in their communities. The budget delivered targeted investments around the Salem area such as:

- \$2.5 million to assist the City of Salem with homelessness response such as temporary shelters, portable toilets and hygiene supplies, and outreach services.
- \$1.2 million in additional funding for the new Salem navigation center, connecting people with supports, health services, and housing.
- \$1.5 million to support the construction of the Yaquina Hall housing project, which broke ground last month in Salem. The project will create 32 new units of affordable housing for the Salem Housing Authority and 20 units of permanent supportive housing to support people experiencing homelessness.
- \$2.4 million to assist the AWARE Food Bank in Woodburn.
- \$3.8 million to the City of Aurora for the Aurora Fire District Fire Station.

## **GREYHOUND RACING AND COLLEGE ATHLETES**

This year’s session saw the passage of two additional priority bills for President Courtney:

[Senate Bill 1504](#) bans greyhound racing in the State of Oregon and ensures gamblers in states or countries where it is illegal to bet on dog racing can’t bypass local laws by sending their bets through Oregon’s remote wagering systems.

[Senate Bill 1505](#) will [increase fairness for college athletes](#) by requiring producers of college team jerseys, video games, and trading cards to pay a royalty to each college athlete whose name, image, or likeness is used.

Both bills will take effect on July 1 of this year upon the Governor’s signature.

The Legislature will continue to work hard during the interim as lawmakers hold interim committee meetings and prepare for the 2023 session.

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