



# SENATOR MARK HASS

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Greater autonomy for Oregon universities on the way with governing boards**

*SB 270B allows Oregon's universities to create governing boards*

SALEM—The Oregon Senate this morning advanced a proposal to allow Oregon universities to establish institutional governing boards. The increased autonomy could translate into more efficient services to students and unprecedented philanthropic activities in the state's higher education system. Senate Bill 270B passed on a 23-7 vote.

“Eighteen months of work went in to shaping the policy in SB 270. Countless hours of fine-tuning. Remarkable work by a team of talented legal minds to craft the technical details,” said Senator Mark Hass (D-Beaverton), who has championed the bill. “It allows a university to have its own board while maintaining critical oversight and a state system of higher education.”

The bill specifically establishes institutional boards for University of Oregon and Portland State University, as well as providing a timeframe for Oregon State University to make a choice about whether to have a board. Additionally, regional universities like Western Oregon University and Eastern Oregon University can explore the possibility of adding a governing board, subject to approval by the State Board of Higher Education.

Each board would range in size between eleven and fifteen members. Board members are appointed by the governor, with one seat designated for a faculty member from the university, one seat designated for a non-faculty staff member and another seat designated for a student of the university. Boards have the power to hire and fire the president of the university and issue bonds to finance the needs of the university.

“I cannot overstate the potential these governing boards have for philanthropy and giving to these universities,” said Hass. “In addition, boards will help universities improve access to higher education and assist faculty in pursuing research and innovation.”

SB 270B also establishes the Special Committee on Regional and Technical Universities and the Work Group on University Shared Services to study and provide recommendations on the transition to board-based university governance.

Senate Bill 270B now goes to the Oregon House of Representatives for a vote.

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