



NEWS

Oregon Legislature - House Democratic Caucus

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House advances bills addressing problems with Cover Oregon

SALEM – Two bills aimed at addressing problems with Cover Oregon secured key support in the Oregon House of Representatives this week.

House Bill 4154 contains common sense solutions to help Oregonians impacted by the failures of the Cover Oregon rollout. The bill won support from both parties and unanimously passed out of the House Health Care Committee on Wednesday.

"This bill contains real solutions that will help Oregonians right now," said Rep. Shemia Fagan (D – Clackamas/East Portland), the chief sponsor of the bill. "We all have our opinions about what Cover Oregon should look like in the future, but after Wednesday's vote I'm hopeful that we can get this done for Oregonians who need health coverage."

Thousands of Oregonians have signed up for health insurance by going around the exchange and directly to private insurers because of technical problems with the website. Currently under federal law, that means they are no longer eligible for the subsidies they were eligible for under the exchange. Among other fixes, HB 4154 would direct the Cover Oregon board to seek a federal waiver to allow these Oregonians to access the subsidies they are due.

Another proposal – House Bill 4122 – is aimed at preventing a failure like the one seen with the Cover Oregon rollout from happening again in the future. The bill, which unanimously passed the House Consumer Protection & Government Efficiency Committee today, would require an Independent Quality Assurance review for all public IT contracts that are over \$5 million and other public IT contracts that meet specified requirements.

In order to make sure these quality assurance reviews are heeded, HB 4122 also requires that the reports are sent to people who can review them promptly and then do something about any problems that are identified.

"We're going to make sure that there are more eyes on these projects. No glossing over important details, ignoring warning signs, or just hoping things turn out for the best," said Rep. Nancy Nathanson (D- Eugene), a co-chief sponsor of the bill with Reps. Paul Holvey (D – Eugene) and Mitch Greenlick (D – Portland).

HB 4154 was referred to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means and HB 4122 now moves to the House floor.

"We need to take these steps now to help more Oregonians get affordable, quality health insurance, and to make sure the mistakes we've seen with the rollout of Cover Oregon are not repeated," House Majority Leader Val Hoyle (D – Eugene) said.

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