



## PRESS RELEASE HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE OFFICE OF THE HOUSE SPEAKER

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# Oregon House Democrats Mark the End of a Successful Year

*Majority caucus highlights accomplishments for working Oregonians,  
looks forward to continuing the work in 2023*

**SALEM, Ore.** - In the Oregon Legislature, 2022 was a year of enormous transition. The year began with the elections of a new House Majority Leader (Rep. Julie Fahey) and Speaker (Rep. Dan Rayfield), and featured even more change as the year closed with preparations for new leadership in the Senate and Governor's office.

Through all of that change, House Democrats stayed focused on delivering historic victories to help Oregon families and small businesses thrive. With the opportunity to invest funding from strong state revenues and federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars, the Legislature made investments that will benefit working and low-income Oregonians in every corner of the state.

"Every community in Oregon faced unique challenges this year, but no challenge is so great that we can't meet it by working together and focusing on what matters most," said [House Majority Leader Julie Fahey](#) (D-West Eugene/ Junction City). "Oregonians have been very clear about what issues they want their elected leaders to address – they're not interested in partisan bickering, they just want things to work. While there's still work to do, I'm proud to say that in 2022 we were able to come together to make significant strides for our state."

"We focused on the issues Oregonians cared most about: housing and homelessness, behavioral health, the cost of living and strong schools," said [House Speaker Dan Rayfield](#) (D-Corvallis). "We'll keep these top priorities in 2023 and work to ensure the essential investments we made for Oregonians are working as intended."

In 2023, Democrats will hold a strong majority in the House with 35 legislators, including 11 new members, and one of the most diverse caucuses in the Oregon Legislature's history.

Below is a partial list of legislative accomplishments from 2022:

### **RESPONDING TO THE HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING CRISES**

Addressing homelessness and making housing more affordable will continue to be a top priority for Democrats in 2023. This year, we took important steps to address these issues and support local governments' response.

**Housing and Homelessness Package**: In February, House and Senate Democrats passed a housing package that includes a \$400 million investment to address homelessness, connect people with shelter and critical services, build on investments to increase the supply of affordable housing, and keep Oregonians in affordable homes.

**A Coordinated Response** (House Bill 4123): We facilitated a coordinated response to homelessness with local governments by creating eight locally led pilot programs with counties, cities, tribes, and community organizations in the Mid-Willamette Valley, Eastern Oregon, Central Oregon, the Columbia Gorge, and in coastal communities. The pilot programs will help local communities leverage existing resources to better help people at risk of homelessness, while also connecting those in crisis with shelters and pathways to more permanent housing.

**Creative Solutions for Wildfire-Impacted Homes** (House Bill 4064): Oregon Democrats supported creative housing solutions for wildfire recovery by streamlining local regulations on manufactured housing and clarifying that Oregonians can place prefabricated homes in mobile home parks, breaking down a barrier for households impacted by the wildfires.

### **DRIVING DOWN THE COST OF LIVING**

As corporate profits have skyrocketed, far too many working Oregonians have struggled to afford everyday basics. To address this, we passed legislation to put money back into the pockets of Oregonians, including:

**\$600 Cost of Living Payments** (House Bill 4157): We passed one-time \$600 payments for over 236,000 low-income Oregonians to cover the cost of daily essentials like prescriptions, diapers, and groceries. Payments were successfully delivered this summer.

**Support for Oregon's Child Care Workforces** (House Bill 4005): Responding to the growing need for more affordable child care, we passed legislation to stabilize child care workforce and infrastructure in order to support working families across the state.

**Expanding Health Care Coverage** (House Bill 4035): We kept approximately 300,000 Oregonians covered and on the Oregon Health Plan (OHP) during the pandemic public health emergency. Moving forward, we hope to transition as many people as possible to a basic health plan and most affordable insurance available on the marketplace exchange if they find they are no longer on OHP.

### **SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESSES & WORKING FAMILIES**

Oregon is home to over 396,000 small businesses, representing 99.4% of businesses across the state. Our goal is to build an economy that works for everyone. That means making sure our small businesses and working families have the tools and support they need to succeed.

**Future Ready Oregon** (Senate Bill 1545): We made a \$200 million investment in career pathways to support education and training for family-wage jobs in health care, manufacturing and technology sectors.

**Increasing Access to Capital** (House Bill 4015): Oregon Democrats made it easier for small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs to access capital, increasing the amount available to a business from the state's loan fund for entrepreneurs from \$100,000 to \$1 million.

**Overtime Pay for Farmworkers** (House Bill 4002): In an extraordinary moment and with the help of many community leaders and farmworkers, we passed legislation to ensure farmworkers are fairly compensated for their overtime work. This will put hard-earned money back into their pockets to help cover expenses like rent, healthcare and other essential needs.

**\$100 Million Rural Infrastructure Package**: In a historic marker of bipartisan collaboration, the Legislature approved a \$100 million investment package to support infrastructure projects and economic development in rural Oregon for many years to come.

**Expanding Broadband** (House Bill 4092): The expansion of broadband will help families, communities, and businesses stay connected. This legislation takes advantage of federal ARPA dollars and establishes a framework to support the planning, oversight, and data collection for future investments for broadband access and digital equity.

## **STRONGER SCHOOLS**

To keep kids in the classroom five days a week and help them through the summer, Oregon Democrats made a **\$300 million investment** that supported teachers, students, and families.

**Addressing the Educator Workforce Shortage** (House Bill 4030): Recognizing the large workforce challenges facing our schools, we helped increase the number of Oregon teachers, substitutes, assistants, and other staff. This investment sets up a new recruitment and retention grant program to support the hiring of new school staff and address educator burnout.

**Summer Learning Programs**: This \$150 million investment created grants for school districts and community organizations to provide summer learning programs and activities, helping kids in Oregon catch up and keep up over the summer.

**Supporting Wildfire-Impacted Schools** (House Bill 4026): We sent additional resources to wildfire-impacted school districts to ensure their funding remains stable over the next several years. This support will allow them to continue operating and providing essential services for displaced families as communities rebuild.

## **COMMUNITY SAFETY & VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

Everyone deserves to be safe in their communities. Meeting that vision requires investing in proven solutions that reduce and prevent violence, while fostering safe communities built on trust.

**Smart Investments in Community Safety**: We invested in community safety and violence prevention programs, including \$15 million to support Community Based Organizations (CBOs) working to prevent violence, \$5 million to expand hospital-based community violence prevention programs, \$13 million to help local communities around the state clean up trash and provide sanitation services, \$14 million to support services for crime victims, and \$10 million for the Oregon Domestic & Sexual Violence Services Fund.

**Support for Victims** (House Bill 4075): We made it easier for victims of crime, including small businesses, to seek restitution and be repaid for economic damages.

**Improving Public Safety** (Senate Bill 1510): This legislation limits stops for non-dangerous traffic violations like broken tail lights, while retaining law enforcement's ability to stop drivers for dangerous behavior. The bill addresses inequities in policing that disproportionately impact Black and Brown communities, while allowing law enforcement to focus on preventing and solving serious crime.

### **INCREASING ACCESS TO ABORTION CARE**

In anticipation of the Supreme Court's *Dobbs* decision overturning *Roe v Wade*, Oregon Democrats established the **Reproductive Health Equity Fund** in February. This provided a \$15 million investment to expand provider capacity in Oregon and address urgent patient needs for abortion funds and practical support, like travel and lodging.

### **CLIMATE RESILIENCE PACKAGE**

In response to the intensifying effects of climate change, Oregon Democrats spearheaded and passed a **\$100 million Climate Resilience Budget** to support drought-impacted communities, keep vulnerable Oregonians safe from extreme weather events, make infrastructure investments that reduce carbon emissions, and address other urgent environmental priorities.

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### **2023 SESSION**

The 82nd Oregon Legislative Assembly will be sworn in on Monday, January 9 and the 2023 legislative session will begin on Tuesday, January 17. For updates and information on committees, bills, news, and more, visit [www.oregonlegislature.gov](http://www.oregonlegislature.gov).

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