



# PRESS RELEASE

## OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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### **Oregon House Passes COVID-19 Response Legislation** *Legislation supports public health, individuals and small business*

SALEM, Ore. – A comprehensive COVID-19 response package passed the Oregon House of Representatives today. The omnibus House Bill 4212 covers a variety of areas to support public health, individuals, local governments, courts and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This legislation is the product of significant work by the Joint Committee on Coronavirus Response and ensures that we have the necessary information, support and clarity for our state to continue to operate and recover during this crisis,” said Rep. Paul Holvey (D-Eugene) who carried the legislation on the floor. “We will continue the work of helping small businesses and individuals are protected and have the support they need to get through.”

The legislation included a number of measures. They were:

- **Emergency shelter siting** - Temporarily waives all siting, design, and zoning regulations for local governments to develop low-barrier shelters and navigation centers to provide support for Oregonians experiencing unsheltered homelessness, who are at high-risk of virus transmission. Siting provisions are limited to 90 days.
- **Remote notary provisions** - Authorizes a pilot program to allow notaries to perform work using electronic technology to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect public health.
- **Enterprise zone deadline extension** - Delays the expiration date of enterprise zones in the state by six months, preventing a June 30 expiration.
- **Individual development account funds for pandemic relief** - Provides flexibility for individual development accounts to be used for necessary medical expenses, to avoid eviction and for living expenses after the loss of a job during the pandemic.
- **COVID-19 race and ethnicity data** - Requires health care providers to collect data on race, ethnicity, preferred spoken and written languages, English proficiency, interpreter needs and disability status (REALD) during the provision of health services related to COVID-19. Directs OHA to adopt rules requiring providers to collect and report data,

specifies timelines for data collection, and allows OHA to provide incentives to health care providers to comply with requirements. Data is confidential and used for public health purposes.

- **Safe public meetings** - Allows local governments and other public bodies to hold virtual meetings so they can continue to provide essential services and make decisions in a public and transparent manner, while preventing the spread of COVID-19 and protecting public health. The language specifies notice, quorum, social distancing, and recording requirements.
- **CARES Act payment protection** - Protects vulnerable Oregonians who receive CARES Act Recovery Rebate payments having portions of those payments withheld, so all relief money can be used to pay for essential needs like housing, food and medical needs. Payments are protected until September 30, 2020.
- **Safe court proceedings** - Gives the Chief Justice the authority in certain circumstances to extend statutory deadlines for court appearances if the COVID-19 pandemic results in delay of court processes. Allows for up to a 60-day extension of the time to conduct a trial of a defendant accused of a person crime, beyond the current 180-day limit, should the court find 1) circumstances caused by the pandemic establish a good-cause delay of the trial; 2) clear and convincing evidence of the substantial and specific danger of physical injury or sexual victimization to the victim or members of the public should release occur; and 3) no release conditions could sufficiently mitigate that danger.
- **Temporary Physician Assistant Authorization** - Physician Assistants (PA) are given flexibility during the emergency period to practice at the top of their scope.

“The healthcare provisions of this legislation are critical for our communities to do better for every Oregonian and ensure that we are meeting the needs of communities that are experiencing disproportionate impacts from this crisis,” said Rep. Rachel Prusak (D-West Linn).

House Bill 4212 passed 47 to 10 and now goes to the Oregon Senate for consideration.

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