



PRESS RELEASE

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Special Session Gets Underway

Legislators to tackle critical issues facing Oregonians

SALEM, Ore. – The Oregon Legislature convened today for the first special session of 2020 to tackle two of the most critical issues of the moment – coronavirus relief and police accountability.

“Oregonians from all walks of life, in every corner of our state, are counting on the legislature to act now,” said House Majority Leader Barbara Smith Warner. “We have the opportunity right now to make meaningful progress on long-entrenched issues and provide the aid that so many are desperate to receive. I look forward to joining my colleagues from across the state and across party lines this week to do what is right for every Oregonian.”

Among the coronavirus relief measures being undertaken in the special session are:

- Eviction Moratorium Extension
- Foreclosure protections
- CARES Payment Act Protection
- COVID-19 Race and Ethnicity Data

So far this year, the Legislature has allocated hundreds of millions of dollars to aid coronavirus relief. The allocation has supported rental assistance and mortgage relief, funds for displaced workers through the Oregon Worker Relief Fund, support for small businesses and mental health care.

Further, a variety of police accountability measures will be taken up in response to nationwide uprisings demanding change.

“These measures represent a first step in the long road ahead to reforming institutions throughout our state,” said Rep. Janelle Bynum (D-Happy Valley), chair of the House Judiciary Committee. “Oregon can and must do better for all its community members. I am so glad we are making swift progress in this session. We will continue to work with community members and groups going forward to identify next steps.”

During the special session, the Legislature will address:

- Law enforcement arbitration
- A statewide police discipline database
- Use of force investigations led by the Oregon Department of Justice
- Require mandatory reporting by officers of other officer behavior
- Protecting freedom of speech and assembly from excessive force

This work builds on work that has been done in recent years to improve police accountability. Among the most significant actions were the bills to prohibit racial profiling, track and analyze law enforcement stops, and require implicit bias training, House Bill 2002 (2015) and House Bill 2355 (2017). The legislature also established a framework for local police departments to implement the use of body cameras, House Bill 2571 (2015).

To see a full list of the bills that will be considered during the special session and to keep up with everything happening in the Joint Committee on the First Special Session of 2020, [click here](#).

Special Session Fast Facts

- This is the 42nd special session in Oregon history.
- The first occurred in 1860, the most recent in 2018.
- The longest ever special session lasted 37 days in 1982.
- The record for the most held in one year was five in 2002.
- There have been three special sessions since the implementation of annual sessions in 2010 (2012, 2013, 2018).
- [Learn more about the history of special sessions in Oregon here.](#)

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