



From the

HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE

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Statement on Special Session; Legislative and Regulatory Recommendations

Salem, ORE. – Today, The Oregon House Republican Caucus issued a statement on Special Session, including recommendations for ways to address the health and economic needs of Oregon:

“The stresses and impacts of this pandemic are already exceeding those which can be mitigated through government intervention. Our hearts are with our frontline health care workers; individuals who have experienced loss or a health crisis through this time; as well as those who are feeling financial pressures and the burden of isolation.

We recognize and celebrate our families, civic organizations and faith communities which step in to offer comfort, solace and encouragement in the face of an unprecedented global challenge that has come to our door and is pushing its way in, interrupting and disrupting our lives.

We remain confident in Oregonians’ indomitable spirit and our legacy of service to the greater good. We lean willingly on each other in this crisis, knowing that unity will shorten our trials and lighten our load. Our future remains bright with hope, as Oregonians work together to sacrifice for our most vulnerable and stand united in our shared belief that we will not only weather this storm, we will grow stronger through it, as we affirm confidently: we are in this together.

House Republicans are committed to working with our colleagues in the legislature, the governor’s office and our federal delegation to meet the needs of Oregon families, businesses and local communities by supporting bi-partisan efforts to improve access to resources which protect public health. As recommendations are developed by the Joint Committee on Coronavirus Response, House Republicans have compiled additional concepts for consideration and continue to support the work of the Joint Committee in anticipation of a special session of the legislature in the near term.

A Special Session should be focused on the health of our citizens, providing emergency-based regulatory relief, financial assistance, and consumer and worker protections to shore up the foundations of a prosperous, stable economy so our businesses, workers and families are able to achieve a full recovery after COVID-19 has been contained.”

Oregon House Republicans Coronavirus COVID-19 Response Recommendations

Health Care

Access to Care

- Expedite recovery care capacity for patients who can be discharged into a lower level of care and are unhoused.
- Incentivize long-term care to take COVID-19 patient not needing acute care.
- Review Medicaid payment rates for COVID-19 patients to ensure access to care.
- State reimbursement for COVID-19 patients who are uninsured and/or unhoused.
- Expand agreement with domestic health insurance carriers for out of network providers to ensure patient access throughout Oregon.
- Medicaid eligibility and COVID test requirements prior to transfers.

Regulatory Relief

- SB 889 Target Growth Benchmark Setting.
- Hospital Nurse Staffing Surveys
- Rules for Community Benefit floor setting.
- Rules for OEBB/PEBB Rate Caps.
- Remove state and local barriers to information sharing between providers, state and local government caring for COVID-19 patient or care related to COVID-19 during the declaration.
- Extend all legislative deadlines for any health care related taskforces, workgroups or committees to focus all attention on the public health crisis.
- Delay any unnecessary rulemaking or additional regulations for hospitals and Coordinated Care Organizations to focus all attention on the public health crisis.
- State-level (ADA Title III-like) discrimination waiver for staffing shortages or infection concerns to reduce the risk people utilizing litigation to get moved up to the front of the line.

Workforce

- Flexibility for meal and rest breaks rule enforcement.
- Reduce restrictions for licensing of Respiratory Therapists.
- Moratorium on CBA's around staffing needs and reassignments (hospitals should not have to renegotiate how to deploy staff in a state of emergency).

Misc

- Census Bureau needs to revise plans to use hospitals beginning April 1.
- Blanket indemnity under the declaration of emergency for actions that are taken or not taken.

Economic Relief for Business

Tax Relief

- Delay implementation of Corporate Activities Tax for at least the first quarter of 2020, so those funds can be diverted to meeting payroll and protecting jobs. Extend, as necessary, if the crisis continues
- Extension of tax filing deadline.
- Tax credit for individuals and business who purchase technology during a specified period for the purpose of facilitation telecommuting options for both businesses and schools.
- Tax credit for employers who offer paid leave beyond the current 5-day state requirement.
- Suspend payroll taxes for small business for the duration of the ban.
- Create a tax credit for restaurants & lodging operations that issue refunds for cancelled events.
- Create incentives, including tax credits, for investments in job retention, extended paid time off and remote work opportunities.
- Defer all city and state business licensing fees for three months.
- Defer all city and state business taxes. Defer payment of quarterly business taxes due April 30, 2020, nine months to February 2021 with no interest or penalties.
- Ask local governments to either put a hold on new tax measures, pending resolution of the Coronavirus crisis or to work with their local business communities to consider delaying or changing implementation strategies.
- Consider a grant program for businesses who have seen revenue decreases of 25% or more.
- Extend timeframe for payment of DEQ title 5 permits and similar permits till after the emergency.

Regulatory Relief

- Establish Moratorium on new rulemakings that are not necessary as a result of the coronavirus crisis so that all attention can be focused on this health crisis. This provision does not include rulemaking to repeal or satisfy an appeal of an existing rule.
- Extend deadlines or lift requirements for regulations that are impracticable or impossible to comply with in this time of crisis, i.e., training requirements when training can't be delivered, prohibition on self-service gasoline service, etc.
- Relax predictive scheduling requirements and enact emergency moratorium on penalties.
- Temporarily lift maximum hours restriction in manufacturing.

- Ensure home supply, hardware, convenience stores, trash pickup, sanitation, janitorial workers, utilities, and banks fall within exemption for mandated closures. Include food manufactures and beverage distributors on a list of critical suppliers exempt from potential closures.
- Delay implementation of minimum wage increases.

Communication

- Create ombudsman office for businesses and individuals to get help and navigate resources.
- Convene emergency state task force responsible for developing ideas that will help the economy with representatives from small business, manufacturing, retail, tourism, transportation, etc.
- Establish regular lines of communication between business and leaders in Oregon. Create sector-by-sector response teams
- Require state agencies including the Oregon Health Authority, BOLI, Employment, Transportation, Lottery, Revenue, and the Secretary of State to create designated resource sites for employers.

Economic Relief for Workers

Unemployment Insurance

- Prioritize the stability and accessibility of the Unemployment Insurance Fund.
- Recapitalize the Unemployment Insurance Fund.
- Lift requirement that employees be employed for six months to trigger Workshare benefit eligibility.

Employment Services

- Resource to connect people who have been laid off with people who are hiring.
- Ensure the unemployment division is properly staffed in order to be able to handle and increased number of claims.

Logistics

Transportation

- Take steps to facilitate the movement of vital supplies, including food, medicine, health care equipment, tec. To market so consumers needs can be met.
- Institute a moratorium on the weight-mile for trucking firms playing a critical role in delivering supplies and consider reduction in corporate minimum taxes.
- Ensure truck drivers can access restrooms and restaurant drive ups.
- Temporarily lift restrictions on drive time to ensure stability in supply chains.

Local/State Government

- Extend city budget timeframes till after the state of emergency has ended.
- Extend budget deadlines for school districts
- Extend deadlines for renewal of drivers licenses/registrations.

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