



# State Representative Alissa Keny-Guyer



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## Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Out of the five sessions I have now served, this has been the most intense! Remember to follow me on my [FB page](#) to keep up daily, since the session moves so fast. Here's a summary to date:

- 1) [Debate on how much to tackle in the short session](#)
- 2) [Financial forecast](#)
- 3) [Housing](#)
- 4) [Foster & elder care](#)
- 5) [Increasing income \(minimum wage, EITC\)](#)
- 6) [Environmental bills & Bullseye Glass](#)
- 7) [Other surviving bills](#)
- 8) [Next coffee and town hall](#)

### **1) Debate on how much we should tackle in a short session**

Opening day began with a debate about whether short sessions should be used for anything other than tweaking the budget and correcting technicalities in previous legislation. Republican leadership has complained that we are tackling too many big issues. I disagree. When I voted for annual sessions at the ballot box in 2010 (see [ballot and voter guide language](#)), I felt that we should join 45 other states that hold annual sessions to deal with pressing state budget and policy issues.

Oregonians elected us to solve problems, and many issues cannot wait two years. Having voted for the foreclosure protection bill in Oregon's first annual session of 2012 - and now promoting housing bills due to our emerging rental crisis, I feel more strongly than ever that we should address the pressing issues EVERY YEAR. If we must work late into the night and on every weekend in a short session to accomplish this, I am ready!

### **2) Financial forecast**

The quarterly forecast that was announced last week showed that Oregon's economy remains stable and job growth continues at a healthy pace. While revenue was up slightly over previous estimates, the forecast indicated that our economy may not grow as rapidly as previously expected in future biennia. What does that mean for this session? We must continue budgeting wisely - making a few strategic investments to help vulnerable Oregonians, while maintaining a strong reserve fund. While [Bloomberg](#) recently concluded that Oregon is "the picture of economic health" with the best-performing economy in the nation, our economic health is not equally shared by all Oregonians.

### 3) Housing

As I wrote in my pre-session newsletter, my biggest focus this session is addressing the *growing crisis* caused by rising rents in a low-vacancy rental market. My updated [list of bills](#) highlights several initiatives to assist first time homeowners, renters, and the homeless.

To summarize, progress on housing bills has been mixed. After nearly 4 ½ hours of passionate testimony by tenants, landlords, and advocates on the opening day of session, I pared back the tenant protections in HB 4001 and HB 4143 to the three protections that had the most support and least opposition: a ban on rent increases in the first year of month-to-month tenancies; after the first year, 90-day notification for rent increases and for no-cause rent terminations on month-to-month tenancies.

HB 4143 passed my Human Services & Housing Committee, had bipartisan co-sponsorship, and had a clear majority to pass the House. However, the Senate indicated it would not pass it unless we removed the 90-day no-cause notification - so the House Rules Committee stripped that provision. I am extremely disappointed since too many tenants live in fear of losing their home with little time to find another... I am committed to seeking further reforms in 2017.



*Opening Day testimony on the Affordable Housing bills*

SB 1533, Inclusionary Zoning (IZ), passed the Senate Human Services Committee last week after also being pared back. As with the tenant protection bill, individual

landlords, realtors, and developers have supported the IZ bill. However because industry lobbyists have been in full force to weaken it, IZ faces more possible "limitations" in the Senate. I hope that we emerge with an IZ bill that leads to affordable units integrated throughout cities so low income families can live near jobs, stores, and neighborhoods where they grew up.

On the brighter side, HB 4042, General Assistance for the disabled homeless, and HB 4064, Affordable Housing Mortgage Fund, passed unanimously out of my Human Services & Housing Committee. SB 1582, Local Innovation and Fast Track (LIFT) Housing for low income families, passed the Senate Human Services Committee. All are headed to Ways and Means. If we also allocate funds for emergency rental assistance, homeless shelters, and preservation of affordable housing, we will make a dent in the housing crisis that impacts far too many Oregonians.

#### **4) Foster & elder care**

Other hot topics in my Human Services & Housing Committee concern how we protect our most vulnerable citizens. My committee passed HB 4083 to establish an Alzheimer's Care Advisory Committee and HB 4080 to establish a Foster Care Advisory Commission, which just passed the House. The Senate Human Services Committee passed SB 1515 to increase therapeutic foster care accountability. The Department of Human Services needs to strengthen its oversight; and I appreciate the leadership of my legislative colleagues, our Governor, and DHS interim director Clyde Saiki to face these issues head on.

#### **5) Increasing income: minimum wage, EITC**

With ballot initiatives to increase the minimum wage to either \$13.50 or \$15 statewide, the Governor proposed a compromise bill. After amending SB 1532, the



*Food Bank advocates who live or work*

Senate passed it a week ago after six hours of debate. It combines a much-needed wage increase with a gradual phase-in over six years to allow businesses to plan ahead. It has a *first in the nation* three-region system with different minimum wage levels based on the cost of living in different areas of the state. Portland's minimum wage will rise to \$14.75 by 2022.

I voted for SB 1532 after more than five hours of debate today. Now that it passed and is headed to the Governor's desk, I look forward to adjusting it in future sessions as needed AND to finding additional ways to help vulnerable Oregonians. Since the proposed minimum wage increase still falls short of a living wage for many families, increasing EITC and child care tax credits will help narrow the gap. HB 4110, which I am chief sponsoring with Rep. Reardon, will increase the EITC by \$10 million/year; HB 4144 will increase utilization of the federal low income tax credits.

Lifting Oregonians out of poverty requires a balanced approach. While employers pay for an increased minimum wage, federal and state taxpayers bear the cost of the EITC. I had hoped we'd also have a bill to increase the corporate tax to support low income Oregonians - especially those on fixed incomes; but it appears that this third leg of the stool will have to wait!

## **6) Environmental bills & Bullseye Glass**

My [list of bills](#) provides updates on the solar, genetically engineered salmon, and other environmental bills I support. While SB 1574, Healthy Climate (Cap and Invest), may have to wait until 2017 for a thorough vetting, the House passed the other high priority "climate change" bill this session: HB 4036, Clean Energy and Coal Transition. This bill to phase out coal, reduce carbon emissions, and double our renewable energy standard is now in the Senate.

While we are making progress, we have a long way to go to equip our state with the regulatory tools and budget to ensure the environmental health of Oregonians...

I share the anger and frustration of many Portlanders over the recent reports of increased cadmium and arsenic in areas near Bullseye Glass in SE Portland. With a degree in public health, I am passionate about reducing toxics in our air, water, and products. In 2015, I co-chief sponsored [SB 478](#) to reduce toxics in children's products, chief sponsored [HB 3056](#) to reduce crematorium emissions, and supported [SB 824](#) and [HB 3310](#) (which failed) to regulate "dirty diesel." I am co-sponsoring [HB 4125](#) this session to safeguard groundwater from contaminants.

On a more personal level, my three children attended elementary and middle schools in SE and NE Portland, and two attended Cleveland High School. I know hundreds of kids who grew up with my children, attended nearby schools, played

outdoor sports, and potentially breathed in toxics from Bullseye Glass. I saw many familiar families in Cleveland's packed auditorium last week, where hundreds stayed for hours to seek answers.



*Packed house at Cleveland HS to hear concerns about air toxics in SE Portland*

My colleagues and I are looking into possible legislation for 2017 to monitor and curb air toxics from Bullseye, ESCO, Precision Castparts, and other local industries. Stay tuned through [Neighbors for Clean Air](#), [Montavilla's Right to Clean Air](#), and the [Inner SE/NE Air Quality FB page](#) for updates about the monitoring results, local and state policy efforts, and a February 23rd legislative hearing about Bullseye and DEQ's role. Join organized efforts to curb air pollution from industry as well as dirty diesel, benzene, oil, coal, and wood burning stoves.

## **7) Other surviving bills**

Read my [list of bills](#) to see which are still alive that provide health coverage and targeted educational programs to low income Oregonians, improve gun safety, combat racial profiling and prostitution, increase wrongful death damages and economic security, and update our fledgling marijuana laws. We are almost half way through the session, so weigh in now on bills that may pass or die in the next two weeks!

## **8) Next Coffee and Town hall**

Next Constituent Coffee  
Saturday, Feb 20, 10:00-11:30am  
Northstar Clubhouse  
5600 NE Glisan St.

Post Session Town Hall  
Co-hosted with Sen. Dembrow & Rep. Smith Warner  
Wednesday, March 9, 7:00-8:30pm  
Place-TBA\*



*My Feb 7th constituent coffee at Mocha Express*

As always, I'm eager to hear your feedback!

Warmly,

*Alissa*

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