



OFFICE OF THE HOUSE SPEAKER

900 Court St., N.E., Room H-269

Salem OR 97301

<http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/kotek>

NEWS RELEASE

June 30, 2019

Danny Moran, 503-986-1204

danny.moran@oregonlegislature.gov

80th Oregon Legislative Assembly wraps up historic session

Student Success Act highlights legislation years in the making

SALEM – The 80th Oregon Legislative Assembly adjourned today on the same day as the constitutional adjournment deadline.

“The significant accomplishments this Legislature achieved were many years in the making and will benefit Oregonians for many years to come,” House Speaker Tina Kotek said.

At the start of the 2019 session, legislative leadership announced four top priorities for the session: creating a new source of funding for preK-12 education, addressing the housing crisis, stabilizing Medicaid funding, and providing new ways to address the impacts of climate change.

Below is an assessment of the progress the Legislature made on these goals, as well as additional key legislation passed in the final months of the session.

EDUCATION

On May 16, Governor Brown signed House Bill 3427, also known as the Student Success Act. The legislation provides \$1 billion per year in new funding for Oregon’s preK-12 education system by creating a commercial activities tax on businesses that earn more than \$1 million in annual Oregon sales. The bill also includes a personal income tax reduction for every Oregonian.

“The Oregon school system has been chronically underfunded for 30 years,” Kotek said. “The Student Success Act will be a catalyst to reduce class sizes, increase graduation rates and ultimately help every Oregon child achieve their full potential.”

Additionally, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 1049 to address the rising rate increases associated with the Public Employee Retirement System. The bill will save school districts and local governments millions of dollars in the coming biennium to prevent layoffs and service cuts.

HOUSING

Early in session the Legislature passed Senate Bill 608, the first bill in the nation to create a statewide law against extreme rent gouging and establish a just-cause standard for evictions.

“SB 608 was artfully crafted to provide renter protections desperately needed across the state, while not discouraging the need for new construction,” Kotek said.

The latter half of the session was focused on addressing housing supply, including:

House Bill 2001: Re-legalizes “missing middle” housing, such as duplexes, triplexes and townhomes, in areas where it is currently banned.

House Bill 2002: Appropriates funding and expands protections to preserve affordable housing.

House Bill 2003: Gives local jurisdictions additional direction and resources to plan for their housing needs.

House Bill 2006: Provides funding for grants to support programs and services for low-income families in need of housing.

House Bill 2896: \$15 million to help residents of manufactured home parks.

Overall, in bonding and general fund dollars, the Legislature is allocating \$350 million in targeted investments to address the state’s housing crisis.

MEDICAID

The Legislature passed House Bill 2010 in February, which extended an assessment on hospitals and insurers to create a six-year funding stream for the Oregon Health Plan and allow the state to obtain significant federal matching funds.

This Medicaid funding package will protect health care for Oregon’s most vulnerable individuals and families – including 400,000 children, as well as seniors and people with disabilities. House Bill 2010 is projected to generate \$335 million in revenue for the 2019-21 biennium and more than \$1.8 billion for the 2021-23 biennium.

Additionally, House Bill 2270 passed the Senate on the final day of the session to refer a tax increase on tobacco products to voters in November 2020. If implemented, officials estimate the tax would raise \$340.4 million for the 2021-23 biennium. Revenue would be distributed on a 90/10 split, with 90% of revenue going to Oregon’s Medicaid program, the Oregon Health Plan and 10% going to fund tobacco cessation and prevention programs.

“The stability House Bill 2010 will provide to the Oregon Health Plan is essential for the health of our state” Kotek said. “If voters approve House Bill 2270, it will help fill an additional \$320 million gap in the next biennium and help cut down on youth tobacco use.”

CLIMATE CHANGE

Following more than a decade of discussion, the House passed House Bill 2020 on June 17 by a 36-24 margin. The bill created a cap-and-invest system in Oregon, charging polluters to pay for a transition to a clean energy economy and mitigate the worst impacts of climate change.

The Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction met for more than a year to craft the bill, including a statewide tour to solicit further feedback. The bill did not come up for a vote in the Senate.

“The science has been clear that we are facing a shrinking time window to take strong action to fight climate change,” Kotek said. “While it’s incredibly disappointing that House Bill 2020 did not make it through the Senate, I remain committed to fighting for bold action to address the crisis of our lifetime.”

ADDITIONAL SIGNIFICANT LEGISLATION

The Legislature also took up recommendations of a report by the Oregon Law Commission to make necessary and significant improvements to workplace culture in the Capitol and address issues of harassment.

House Bill 3377 creates a new independent, nonpartisan Legislative Equity Office and the bipartisan, bicameral Joint Conduct Committee, among other key steps. HCR 20 replaces the current Legislative Branch Personnel Rule 27 and expands the list of individuals subject to the respectful workplace rule beyond just legislators.

Additionally, several more bills passed both chambers that were many years in the making: House Bill 2005, House Bill 2007, House Bill 2015, House Bill 3076 and Senate Bill 1008.

House Bill 2005 will create paid family and medical leave insurance in Oregon. When the benefits start in 2023, employees will have access to paid leave to care for or bond with a child during the first year after birth, adoption, or foster placement; care for themselves or a family member with a serious health condition; and access for those who have experienced domestic violence.

House Bill 2007 will require certain motor vehicle users in Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties to transition to clean diesel engines by 2025. Diesel emissions contribute to the state’s acute air quality problems and put children, seniors, and those with health challenges at risk.

House Bill 2015 will allow Oregon residents who pass written and driving tests, pay the fees, and provide proof of identity and residency to receive a standard driver’s license. The bill includes anti-discrimination language for those with standard licenses or ID cards that are not Real ID compliant and explicitly states that they are not evidence of the holder’s citizenship or immigration status.

House Bill 3076 will require the Oregon Health Authority to work with hospitals to create a minimum requirement for community benefit and charity care, as well as establish reasonable

limits to medical debt collection and establish written financial policies in commonly spoken languages for patients below 100% of the federal poverty line.

Senate Bill 1008 is a comprehensive bill that is the result of a year-long work group on reforming the juvenile justice system. The bill will ensure that minors charged with Measure 11 crimes will not receive automatic life sentences and will have greater access to a second look hearing, along with other key reforms.

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