



# OFFICE OF THE HOUSE SPEAKER

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## OFFICIAL RELEASE

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### **Special Session provides relief for Oregonians impacted by COVID-19, wildfires**

*Statewide eviction moratorium extended, schools and restaurants supported*

SALEM – The Oregon Legislature today passed four bills to address urgent issues facing individuals and families whose lives have been impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the Labor Day wildfires. The legislation will keep people in their homes, support independent restaurants that are barely hanging on, and dedicate ongoing funding for critical pandemic-related programs.

“State legislators showed up and did their jobs to help Oregonians who were facing tremendous risk in the month ahead because of some critical year-end deadlines,” House Speaker Tina Kotek said. “It was absolutely essential to extend the eviction moratorium and provide more funding to stabilize the rental market. The moratorium worked to keep Oregonians housed during the worst public health crisis of our lifetime. Small landlords will also get an important lifeline.

“Despite our success today, I’m frustrated that we couldn’t do more, including an extension of foreclosure protections that expire next week. We need to do all we can to avoid the mistakes of the Great Recession and keep people housed. This means recognizing that income inequality has been magnified by the pandemic, especially for communities of color and low-income workers. We must act with urgency with one more Emergency Board before the start of the 2021 session next month.”

Below is a summary of the legislation that passed:

### **House Bill 4401 - Eviction Moratorium and Landlord Compensation Fund**

HB 4401 ensures that renters across the state cannot be evicted through June 30, 2021 if they can't pay their rent due to impacts of COVID-19. It also establishes a \$150 million fund to cover overdue rent payments, which will help eligible renters avoid falling further behind, while also ensuring landlords have a voluntary way to recover payments they were counting on.

Recent data from the National Council of State Housing Agencies estimates that anywhere from 27,700 to 56,100 Oregon households would have been at risk of eviction on January 1<sup>st</sup> without the extension of the eviction moratorium statewide.

### **House Bill 4402 - School Limited Liability Protections**

Provides temporary liability protections to schools that are complying with COVID-19 emergency rules. Schools are not protected if they are not following Oregon Occupational Safety & Health (OSHA) and Oregon Health Authority (OHA) rules. This bill provides additional incentive for schools, administrators, and teachers to follow health directives and best practices. The measure provides whistleblower protections to third party contractors, such as janitorial service providers, bus drivers, and food service providers.

### **Senate Bill 1801 - Restaurant Relief**

Allows restaurants and bars temporarily to sell and deliver mixed drinks to-go if the mixed drink is sold in a sealed container. The bill caps fees that third-party delivery providers can issue at 15%. Local governments with already-existing third-party fee caps can maintain their own lower limits.

Many independent restaurants are currently hanging on by a thread, and this support for small businesses comes at a critical time as the pandemic continues and restaurants have had in-person dining disrupted.

### **Senate Bill 5731 - Emergency COVID-19 and Wildfire Recovery Funding**

A large portion of the federal funding that Congress passed through the CARES Act came with an expiration date at the end of 2020. This bill includes \$600 million to allow the state to continue to fund critical pandemic-related programs that will support Oregonians in the first few months of 2021, as well as provide more support for Oregonians impacted by the Labor Day wildfires. It also includes \$150 million for the Landlord Compensation Fund and \$50 million for rental assistance (as defined in House Bill 4401).

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