



# SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Senate takes action to deal with Cover Oregon fallout**

*HB 4154B provides relief to families impacted by the problems of the exchange website's rollout*

SALEM –This afternoon the Oregon Senate took action on a number of items intended to provide assistance to Oregonians who were affected by the failed rollout of Cover Oregon's website. House Bill 4154B, which also contains provisions to hold the insurance exchange accountable, passed with a vote of 30-0.

More and more Oregonians have gained access to critical health care coverage through Cover Oregon. As of early March, 38,806 Oregonians had signed up for a private health insurance plan through the exchange and 84,991 more qualified for the Oregon Health Plan. But because of technical problems with the website, many others worked around the exchange and went directly to private insurers.

HB 4154 directs the Cover Oregon board to seek federal insurance subsidies for Oregonians who would have qualified for tax breaks if they had enrolled through the exchange.

“We’re continuing to demand that Oracle and the executive branch to fix the Cover Oregon website so Oregonians can enroll in a health plan. But today we’re also taking action to ensure proper treatment of people who have tried in good faith to get their families covered,” said Senator Alan Bates (D-Medford). “These steps will help more families get access to critical health care and insurance.”

HB 4154 also pushes to extend the individual enrollment deadline by a month in order to increase enrollment numbers and to secure tax credits for small businesses eligible for the Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP). Yesterday, the Senate passed Senate Bill 1582B, which helps individuals who had been receiving health insurance through Oregon's high-risk insurance pool.

To increase the amount of accountability over the exchange, HB 4154 extends the state's whistleblower protections to employees of Cover Oregon. Additionally, the bill provides the governor with the authority to remove the entire Cover Oregon board of directors in a single year.

“The Legislature has acted to extend support to Oregonians who have struggled with getting health insurance through Cover Oregon. We've also taken action on important accountability measures so that we can make this right,” said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland). “While I am frustrated that Cover Oregon's website has failed so many people, I still have great faith that health care reform will make a huge difference for the hundreds of thousands of newly-insured Oregonians.”

House Bill 4154B now goes to Governor John A. Kitzhaber for his approval.

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