

Oregon News

POLITICS

Oregon Republicans seek to partially roll back state sanctuary laws

KGW | By Blair Best

Taking a cue from the Trump administration's broad crackdown on immigration, Republican state lawmakers in Oregon are pitching an effort to "modernize" [Oregon's sanctuary state law](#) by creating carveouts for people convicted of a wide variety of criminal offenses.

On Monday, Republicans in the Oregon House introduced [House Bill 3551](#) to "modernize Oregon's sanctuary law." It would permit local law enforcement agencies, Oregon State Police and corrections officers to work with federal authorities to identify and remove undocumented immigrants convicted of violent felonies, felony sex offenses and Class A misdemeanors.

Federal Research Funding, Now Imperiled, Supports 5,000 Jobs in Oregon

Willamette Week | By Anthony Effinger

Starting this month, Stadum said, the NIH would cut back on the cash it hands out for "indirect costs" of scientific discovery—things like lights, heat, maintenance, insurance and clerical work needed to protect privacy in human trials, to name a few. As of Feb. 10, the NIH said, the percentage given for those things would be 15% and no more.

Institutions like OHSU negotiate percentages for indirect costs. The university's rate has been 56% of every grant. That meant that for every \$100,000 that OHSU got from the NIH to pay for researchers' salaries and supplies, it got an additional \$56,000 for overhead. At the new rate, it would get just \$15,000.

Oregon senators call for federal firefighters to be exempt from hiring freeze

OPB | By April Ehrlich

Oregon could have far fewer firefighters ready to battle blazes on federal lands next fire season — and may do less advance work aimed at mitigating the risk of large fires — due to the Trump administration's hiring freeze and funding cuts, according to U.S. lawmakers.

Trump's hiring freeze order exempts positions related to "public safety," but it doesn't specifically exempt wildland firefighters. As a result, some agency officials have stalled onboarding until they get more clarity.

Staffing shortages might shift firefighting responsibility onto state agencies, or the federal government might need to backfill firefighting gaps with expensive private contractors.

New livestock compensation bill to get hearing

Wallowa County Chieftan | By Bill Bradshaw

Sen. Todd Nash, R-Enterprise, in one of his first actions as a state lawmaker, is sponsoring Senate Bill 777, which would increase the compensation to seven times the market value of most livestock. The bill goes before the Senate Natural Resources Committee at 1 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 13, at the state Capitol.

Oregon state Senator Jeff Golden proposes state constitutional amendment

The Jefferson Exchange | By Mike Green, Natalie Golay

Oregon Senator **Jeff Golden**, D-Ashland, has sponsored a legislative effort that would seek to enshrine a clean, safe and healthy environment amendment in the Oregon Constitution.

Senate Joint Resolution 28, the "Right to a Healthy Environment Amendment," is backed by a number of senators and representatives, including Rep. Pam Marsh, D-Ashland. It would take a simple majority of the Legislature to place the amendment before voters on the next general election ballot.

OHSU, Oregon research institutions stand to lose millions in proposed NIH funding cuts

Oregon Live | By Kristine de Leon

Oregon Health & Science University stands to lose tens of millions in federal funding under the Trump administration's directive to cap National Institutes of Health payments to research institutions to help cover overhead costs.

If allowed to proceed, though, change would deal a major blow to OHSU, Oregon's largest recipient of NIH funding. OHSU received \$277 million from the NIH in fiscal year 2024, according to federal data, \$73.6 million of it for indirect costs.

[**Oregon considers selling 65 acres of Hayden Island for ODOT conservation**](#)

OPB | By Erik Neumann

State officials took the first step Tuesday to sell 65 acres of shoreline on the southwestern side of Hayden Island to the Oregon Department of Transportation. If ultimately approved, it would create a conservation area while satisfying the mitigation requirements of a new Interstate Bridge across the Columbia River.

If the land sale is approved, ODOT would remove dredged soils that have filled Hayden Island's shoreline to offset potential flooding impacts when massive seismic foundations are built in the Columbia River to support the new bridge. Removing soil will also improve habitat for aquatic species in the North Portland Harbor, according to Bill Warncke, the deputy environmental manager for the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program and ODOT.

[**Oregon needs to reuse more water | Opinion |**](#)

Bulletin Editorial Board

You drink reused water daily. And if there is going to be enough water to go around, Oregon is going to need to get more serious about reclaiming used water, purifying it and using it again.

The Legislature has [directed that the state boost water reuse in the past](#), but as the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality [said late last year](#): "Previous initiatives that aimed to address water reuse in the state have been incomplete or unrealized, primarily due to a lack of sustained resources."

This session, there is another attempt with [House Bill 2169](#). Reps. Ken Helm, D-Beaverton, and Mark Owens, R-Crane, are the leaders on many state water issues and worked on this bill.

The bill declares water reuse is state policy. It also directs the Department of Environmental Quality and the Water Resources Department to develop an interagency water reuse team.

[**Oregon Republican Representatives send letter to OSAA urging change of transgender policy**](#)

Portland Tribune | By Austin White

Oregon House of Representative Republicans sent a letter to the Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) Executive Director Peter Weber on Tuesday, Feb. 11, urging the organization to reverse its gender inclusive policy on transgender student-athletes participation.

Signing the letter to Weber are six Republicans: Reps. Dwayne Yunker, Grants Pass; Boomer Wright, Reedsport; Darin Harbick, Rainbow; Ed Diehl, Stayton; E. Werner Reschke, Klamath Falls; and Gregory Smith, Heppner.

The House bill is one of three pieces of legislation introduced by state Republicans, joining LC 3895 which was introduced by House Republican Leader Christine Drazen, R-Canby, as well as [Senate Bill 618](#), sponsored by **Sen. Daniel Bonham, R-The Dalles**.

[**Trump administration and Democratic AGs launch battle over funding freeze in appeals court**](#)

Oregon Capital Chronicle | By Jennifer Shutt

The 1st Circuit Court of Appeals on Tuesday declined to block a lower court's order that requires the Trump administration to unfreeze funding for grants and loans.

[**Listen: Burned out: How wildfires might drive insurers out of Oregon**](#)

KLCC | By Michael Dunne

What might happen if property and home owners insurance become so expensive that most people couldn't afford it, or worse, what would happen if there was no insurance to be had at all?

[**No relief: Inflation unexpectedly heated up last month**](#)

OPB | By Scott Horsley

Inflation saw a surprising increase last month, as the price of groceries, gasoline and shelter all climbed.

[**NW Natural pushes back on bill that would require notifying customers about use of hydrogen**](#)

Oregon Capital Chronicle | By Alex Baumhardt

Last summer, a Democratic state senator heard from hundreds of constituents in southeast Portland who were concerned about NW Natural secretly supplying residents with natural gas blended with small amounts of hydrogen.

Sen. Khanh Pham of Portland told the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment at a hearing Monday that they weren't just concerned that NW Natural didn't notify them, but that it wasn't required to inform the state's Public Utility Commission either. In response, Pham is now sponsoring [Senate Bill 685](#) to require utilities to notify customers and the commission that it's going to supply residences with hydrogen-blended natural gas.

EDUCATION

[Small Class Sizes are a Top Priority for Teachers. But Do They Improve Student Outcomes?](#)

Willamette Week | By Joanna Hou

Teachers have largely driven discussions, advocating for smaller class sizes to ensure students get individualized attention and educators are well prepared. Accordingly, one of the top priorities this legislative session for the Oregon Education Association, the statewide teachers' union, is that class size becomes a mandatory part of collective bargaining at all school districts.

It's also the case that mathematically, smaller class sizes require hiring more teachers. That would mean more members for OEA, increasing the union's political clout in Salem.

The most famous class size study is the Tennessee Student Teacher Achievement Ratio project. The STAR study, conducted from the mid-1980s through the early 1990s, assigned random students and teachers to small classes (13 to 17 students) and large ones (22 to 25 students). Students in smaller classes experienced statistically significant improvements in reading and mathematics.

That study is the one OEA and many other advocates of smaller class sizes cite regularly as evidence that smaller can mean better. But research in the years following the STAR study has not pointed toward major meaningful results.

As *WW* first reported last week, data from Georgetown University indicates Oregon has increased its education spending by 80% in the past 10 years while outcomes have worsened. So finding the biggest bang for the buck is crucial.

Kerr says that, dollar for dollar, interventions like high-impact tutoring can make a much more significant difference.

HEALTH CARE

[Striking nurses, Providence have yet to meet or schedule talks since vote to reject contract](#)

Oregon Live | By Kristine de Leon

Negotiators for Providence and its striking nurses have not met since the two sides reached an [ill-fated agreement](#) a week ago, and they have no meetings on the books.

Nearly 5,000 nurses at all eight Providence hospitals in Oregon last week [rejected a tentative agreement](#) reached between the health system and their labor union, the Oregon Nurses Association, extending a strike that began Jan. 10 and is now in its fifth week.