

OREGON SENATE REPUBLICAN CAUCUS

# DAILY CLIPS



## Oregon News

### POLITICS

#### Former top aides to Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek form new political strategies firm

OPB | *By Lauren Dake*

Three top staffers who departed Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek's office after issues tied to first lady **Aimee Kotek Wilson** have formed a new public affairs and political strategy firm. Kotek's former chief of staff **Andrea Cooper**, former deputy chief of staff **Lindsey O'Brien** and former director of public affairs **An Do** are launching "March Strategies." All three women have extensive backgrounds in the upper echelons of state government and campaign work.

#### Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries warns employers that threats to call ICE are illegal

*Oregon Capital Chronicle* | *By Mia Maldonado*

Threatening to call federal immigration authorities on employees after they raised concerns about their working conditions is considered illegal retaliation, the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries is warning employers.

**The agency did not immediately specify how many complaints it received involving threats to call Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, or ICE.**

### TRANSPORTATION

#### On tap for Oregon special session: 6-cent gas tax hike, transit funding and more

OPB | *By Dirk VanderHart*

Kotek's office had not released a detailed summary of her proposal as of Wednesday morning. But the governor offered some details in a press conference, stating it would:

- Raise the state's 40-cent-per-gallon gas tax to 43 cents beginning in January. That change is likely to raise around \$150 million a year, according to past estimates.
- Hike vehicle title and registration fees Oregon motorists pay. Registration fees would increase by \$42 and titling fees by \$139, the governor said. Electric vehicles, which do not pay gas taxes, would be required to pay an additional \$30 on top of existing fees.
- Double the payroll tax that currently takes 0.1% out of workers' pay checks to support transit. The tax, created in 2017, [sent roughly \\$130 million](#) to state transit

agencies last fiscal year. Transit agencies have asked lawmakers to increase the tax fivefold, but Democrats balked in this year's session, advocating an increase to 0.18%. Kotek's proposal is to raise it to 0.2%.

- Require drivers of electric vehicles and hybrids to enroll in the state's OReGo program, which charges drivers for miles driven. Such a shift is considered necessary for funding road projects as EVs continue to gain popularity and gas tax revenue is expected to decline.
- Require more frequent auditing of the Oregon Department of Transportation so lawmakers have better insight into the progress and cost of major road projects. Those accountability measures are a response to backlash over huge cost increases of ODOT projects.
- Eliminate existing statutory language [allowing for tolling on Portland-area](#) highways. That language has caused heartburn for some lawmakers, even though Kotek [paused tolling plans](#) last year amid blowback. State Sen. Mark Meek, D-Gladstone, even used the statutory language to claim without evidence that his party was sneakily trying to reinstitute tolling plans with their transportation bill this year. Kotek said eliminating the language would assuage those concerns.

**Republican lawmakers have lambasted Democrats all year for plans to hike taxes to pay for roads. They have argued the state should repurpose existing funds, for instance money that supports public transit or EV purchases to pay for nuts-and-bolts road maintenance.**

**GOP leaders made clear earlier this week their stance hasn't changed.**

"Just weeks after the Legislature rejected the largest tax increase in Oregon history, the Governor is calling us back to Salem to try again, this time with less notice and less transparency," **Senate Minority Leader Daniel Bonham, R-The Dalles**, said in a statement Tuesday.

**But Kotek told reporters she had no sign from Republicans that they would attempt to scuttle a special session by not showing up.** Both legislative chambers require a quorum of two-thirds of members to conduct business.

"Everyone is going to make an effort to be there and I believe we'll have a quorum in both chambers," Kotek said, adding that some lawmakers might be on vacation.

That latter point has been a repeated source of frustration for the governor in the weeks since lawmakers adjourned without passing new road funding. While she was perceived by many to be distant from transportation discussions during the session, she has been extremely engaged in the past month.

"I'm not complaining, but the minute the session ended I canceled all my plans," Kotek told reporters. "We have been working on this nonstop with folks."

**[Gov. Tina Kotek unveils transportation funding plan for special session to maintain services, avoid layoffs](#)**

*The Oregonian* | By Carlos Fuentes

Although Democrats hold enough seats in each chamber to push through any tax-raising proposal along party lines, they would need a handful of Republicans across both

chambers to attend a special session to provide the two-thirds quorum necessary for a vote.

**Kotek said she is confident that enough lawmakers from both parties will show up next month and vote for the funding package.** “I believe the proposal, as I provided, has the support to be successful on Aug. 29,” she said.

After Kotek announced the upcoming session on Tuesday, **Republican leaders criticized the governor for proposing any tax increases, which they say will unnecessarily harm Oregonians.** To boost funding for basic road maintenance, some [Republicans have suggested](#) cutting other agency services they see as non-vital, particularly programs focused on equity, accessibility and climate-friendly initiatives.

**Republican leaders have not said whether they expect members of their caucus to show up for the special session.**

“Just weeks after the Legislature rejected the largest tax increase in Oregon history, the governor is calling us back to Salem to try again, this time with less notice and less transparency,” **Senate Republican Leader Daniel Bonham** of The Dalles said in a Tuesday press release.

### [Gov. Kotek pushes new transportation bill with higher gas tax, ODOT ‘accountability’](#)

*KOIN 6 | By Aimee Plante, Lisa Balick*

To prevent further losses, the governor believes she has the votes for a new bill that aims to bring more funding to the state highway trust fund for the 2025-27 biennium, along with funds for the Statewide Transportation Fund.

To do so, the bill would raise the gas tax six cents per gallon and hike vehicle registration and title fees. It also includes an increase in the payroll tax for transit to help TriMet and other mass transit organizations avoid cutting service.

Despite the previous funding bill’s failure in the final days of the regular legislative session, Kotek believes this one is on track to be successful.

### [Gov. Kotek reveals transportation funding bill details ahead of August special session](#)

*KATU | By Vasili Varlamos*

Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek unveiled her plans to fund transportation in a virtual media availability Tuesday morning.

The initial framework of the bill includes a six-cent increase to the state's gas tax. The statewide gas tax in Oregon is \$0.40.

Vehicle registration fees would increase by \$43, and title fees would increase by \$139.

There would also be a \$30 increase to supplemental fees for electric vehicles.

State Republicans argue that there is no need for a special session or to increase taxes.

### [Kotek calls for special legislative session amid ODOT layoffs, transportation crisis](#)

*KOIN 6 | By Michaela Bourgeois, Ariel Iacobazzi*

**Senate Republican Leader Daniel Bonham (R-The Dalles)** furthered, “Just weeks after the Legislature rejected the largest tax increase in Oregon history, the Governor is calling us back to Salem to try again, this time with less notice and less transparency. Republicans offered a common-sense plan to get ODOT focused back on its core mission, protect

critical maintenance jobs, restore accountability, and avoid raising costs on hardworking Oregonians. Democrats didn't even give it a glance."

**Bonham** added, "If Governor Kotek were serious about fixing our transportation system, she would start by repealing her executive order on project labor agreements. That one decision alone adds 20 to 30 percent to the cost of every project. Her concern over budget shortfalls rings completely hollow when she's knowingly forcing taxpayers to overpay by millions. Instead, she's playing politics with frontline workers to pressure lawmakers into voting for higher taxes."

The **Senate Republican leader** concluded, "For decades, Governor Kotek and her party have prioritized spending on programs that line the pockets of special interests, such as costly housing initiatives that haven't delivered real results, while neglecting critical infrastructure needs. This mismanagement has directly contributed to the crisis we face today. Oregonians deserve roads that work, bridges that last, and a government that puts them first, not more status quo policies and backroom deals to reward special interests."

### [Gov. Tina Kotek announces special session to secure additional transportation dollars, avoid layoffs](#)

*The Oregonian* | By Carlos Fuentes, Sami Edge

**House Republican Leader Christine Drazan** of Canby blamed Democrats on Tuesday for the transportation package imploding during the session. She said Democrats refused to consider a House Republican plan to fund transportation with existing revenue instead of new taxes and contended that a special session could still be avoided if Democrats instead sought to spend emergency reserves on transportation.

"We don't want her to call the special session just because we believe there's a better way,"

**Drazan** told *The Oregonian/OregonLive* on Tuesday. "We don't think Oregonians want this. We don't think they can afford (new taxes). We don't think the agency is accountable enough to be given this money."

**Drazan did not say Tuesday whether House Republicans will show up for the special session.** Democrats would need at least a handful of Republicans in both chambers to achieve the two-thirds quorum they need to conduct business. House Republicans "want to solve this problem," **Drazan** said, but she added that she has not yet met with her caucus to understand where her members stand on the special session.

**Senate Minority Leader Daniel Bonham** of The Dalles told *The Oregonian/OregonLive* that he had no idea that Kotek planned to announce the Aug. 29 special session on Tuesday and **was unsure how many Senate Republicans would be available to attend.**

"Literally talked to her yesterday and had zero idea this was coming today," **Bonham** said. "I'm shocked, quite frankly."

### [Gov. Kotek calls for special session to pass ODOT funding, Oregon transportation projects](#)

*KATU*

**Senate Minority Leader Daniel Bonham, R-The Dalles**, criticized the Governor's push for higher taxes, while ignoring Republican proposals, he says, that are focused on accountability, job protection, and core transportation needs.

"If Governor Kotek were serious about fixing our transportation system, she would start by repealing her executive order on project labor agreements. That one decision alone adds 20 to 30 percent to the cost of every project. Her concern over budget shortfalls rings completely hollow when she's knowingly forcing taxpayers to overpay by millions. Instead, she's playing politics with frontline workers to pressure lawmakers into voting for higher taxes," said Bonham in a statement.

### [Oregon Gov. Kotek calls transportation funding special session just before Labor Day](#)

*Oregon Capital Chronicle | By Julia Shumway*

**Rep. Kevin Mannix, R-Salem** and the only Republican to vote in favor of the earlier transportation package on a legislative committee, told the Capital Chronicle that he would participate in the special session and evaluate funding proposals.

"I'm going to be very cautious and see what kind of proposals come forward. We should always be paying attention, and I'll be paying attention, but we need to be very careful," Mannix said.

### ['The first step of many': Kotek calls special session for transportation funding fix](#)

*KGW | By Jamie Parfitt, Blair Best*

The governor said she's directed ODOT to postpone layoffs until September so lawmakers have a chance to avert them with a transportation funding package.

### [TriMet outlines planned bus and MAX service cuts, including shortening the Green Line](#)

*KGW | By Anthony Macuk*

The state legislature failed to pass a transportation bill earlier this year. Gov. Tina Kotek announced Tuesday that she will call a special session to try again.

## **BUSINESS & ECONOMY**

### [Ritz-Carlton in Portland sold back to lender to 'strengthen' struggling property](#)

*KOIN 6 | By Aimee Plante*

The [Ritz-Carlton in downtown Portland](#) was sold back to the lender in an effort to "strengthen" the struggling property, new management announced Tuesday.

### [Semiconductor companies are slashing jobs in Oregon. This one's expanding](#)

*The Oregonian | By Mike Rogoway*

Northwest chip manufacturers are [in a tough stretch](#), responding to steep drops in sales by cutting jobs and scaling back production.

Analog Devices is acting like the boom times never stopped.

## **EDUCATION**

### [State Investigation Finds Preschool Promise Made \\$1.4 Million in Wasteful Payments](#)

*Willamette Week | By Joanna Hou*

Oregon's Preschool Promise program awarded hundreds of thousands of dollars to providers that enrolled as few as one or two children, according to findings of an Oregon Secretary of State's Office investigation released Wednesday.

### [At Portland Public Schools, a 'mom takeover' and a brewing storm](#)

*The Oregonian* | By Julia Silverman

Four [newly elected members](#) of the Portland Public Schools board were sworn in this week, kicking off a pivotal year for Oregon's largest school district.

All four are parents of children who attend Portland Public Schools. They collectively referred to the new board makeup as a "mom takeover" during Tuesday's swearing in ceremony at Grant High School in Northeast Portland, which also showcased the new student representative to the board, Roosevelt High School's Ian Ritorto.

### [Oregon's governor made a deal with Nvidia to get AI education in Oregon schools. What does it mean?](#)

*Oregon Capital Chronicle* | By Alex Baumhardt

Months after Oregon signed an agreement with the computer chip company Nvidia to educate K-12 and college students about artificial intelligence, details about how AI concepts and "AI literacy" will be taught to children as young as 5 remain unclear.

## **CRIME & PUBLIC SAFETY**

### [Sexual assault at TriMet station leads to 25-year sentence](#)

*The Oregonian* | By Noelle Crombie

A man who [sexually assaulted an unconscious woman](#) at a TriMet transit center [two years ago](#) was sentenced Tuesday to 25 years in prison.

## **2026 ELECTION**

### [Teachers' Union President Angela Bonilla Eyes Run for Oregon Legislature](#)

*Willamette Week* | By Joanna Hou

**Angela Bonilla**, president of the Portland Association of Teachers, is considering a challenge to **state Rep. Rob Nosse (D-Portland)** for his legislative seat, according to two sources familiar with the matter.

Nosse, who has held the seat since 2014, has indicated he will seek reelection. He is a longtime organizer for the Oregon Nurses Association and went unchallenged in the 2024 election.

### [Oregon State Rep. Mannix files ballot measures to limit pretrial release, end estate tax](#)

*Oregon Capital Chronicle* | By Saanth Nanguneri

The Salem Republican argues that Oregon voters are tired of inaction on criminal defendants being released before trial and the state's taxes on assets of deceased residents.

## **National News**

**Bryan Kohberger sentenced to life in prison for murders of 4 Idaho students**

*Associated Press*

Bryan Kohberger has been sentenced to four consecutive life sentences in court on Wednesday after admitting to killing four University of Idaho students in November 2022.