

## **Oregon News**

### **POLITICS**

#### **[Oregon wants to throw out deadline, narrow risk assessments of sex offenders due to backlog](#)**

*Oregon Live | By Maxine Bernstein*

State parole board leaders are urging lawmakers to scrap a [state-mandated deadline to evaluate](#) and classify all of Oregon's registered sex offenders by risk.

They also want to drop some sex offenders from the evaluations and place them automatically in the lowest risk category.

The state has about 18,000 unclassified sex offenders out of 33,620 people on its sex offender registry. Of the unclassified offenders, about 12,591 live in Oregon and are out of custody.

Meanwhile, the state is adding about 100 new people to the registry each month.

Six specialists for the Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision complete about 22 assessments and classifications a month.

The board is supposed to complete the backlog of classifications by the end of 2026.

State lawmakers have twice extended the original 2016 deadline for the parole board to complete the risk assessments and approved more than \$6 million for the work.

Parole board officials have said for years that they wouldn't be able to meet next year's deadline.

Senate Bill 821 would remove the deadline requirement altogether.

Companion legislation, Senate Bill 820, would halt risk level classifications for people on the sex offender registry who were convicted before Jan. 1, 2014, except under certain circumstances.

The exceptions include: People with multiple separate conviction dates for sex offenses; those who are younger than 35 as of Jan. 1, 2026; anyone required to register as a sex offender and about to be released from prison; and those petitioning to be removed from the registry.

If SB 820 passes, the parole board still must classify more than 3,700 people into risk levels, according to the board.

The proposals drew opposition from victim rights advocates, including Danielle Tudor and Tiffany Edens, who were both attacked in the Portland area by [serial rapist Richard Troy Gillmore](#), and the Oregon District Attorneys Association.

State Rep. Christine Drazan, R-Canby, and **Sen. Cedric Hayden, R-Fall Creek**, also criticized the bill.

Hayden criticized Kotek for not showing up to the Judiciary Committee hearing on the bills that she and the parole board requested and she supports. The bills, he said, will create a "sanctuary status" for sex offenders in Oregon.

#### **[Survivors, advocate criticize Oregon's plan to clear backlog of unclassified sex offenders](#)**

*KATU | By Wright Gazaway*

Under the proposal, the Board of Parole would only need to do risk assessments on offenders who are younger than 35 years old next January and people with two or more sex crimes convictions. It would continue to do the assessments on people getting out of prison or moving into Oregon.

Bailey defended SB820 as a data-driven solution to the problem and said research shows younger offenders and people with multiple convictions are most likely to reoffend.

"If these bills pass this legislative session, we will never get oversight or power back over the sex offender registry and how it works," rape survivor Danielle Tudor said.

#### **[Oregon's unemployment rate is highest since 2021, even though state keeps adding jobs](#)**

*Oregon Live | By Mike Rogoway*

Oregon's unemployment rate climbed to 4.4% in January, its highest level in more than three years, even though the state continued to add jobs overall.

Oregon's rising unemployment rate in January may reflect layoffs late last year at major employers including Intel, [which laid off 1,300 workers in Washington County last fall](#).

Overall, Oregon added nearly 22,600 jobs in the 12 months ending in January. The biggest gains were in health care, which added 14,500 jobs. State and local government added 8,600 jobs, about half of them in public education.

Manufacturing shed the most jobs over the past year, eliminating 7,600 jobs — most of them in [the faltering electronics sector](#).

#### [Oregon ranks as 12th most expensive state for starting a business](#)

KOIN | By Aimee Plante

Oregon is the 12th most expensive state for those looking to kick off that dream business. This is due to high-income tax rates, wages, real estate, and electricity bills. Oregon is also the state with the sixth-highest number of regulations in the country.

#### [Oregon's Lori Chavez-DeRemer wins Senate confirmation as Trump's labor secretary](#)

Associated Press

The Senate voted Monday to confirm Oregon politician [Lori Chavez-DeRemer](#) as U.S. labor secretary, a cabinet position that puts her in charge of enforcing federally mandated worker rights and protections at a time when the White House is trying to [eliminate thousands of government employees](#).

#### [Citizen-driven ballot measures could become more rare under proposals taken up by Oregon lawmakers](#)

OPB | By Dirk Vanderhardt

In a hearing Monday morning, a committee took up House Joint Resolution 3 and House Joint Resolution 11. Both would place measures on the 2026 ballot seeking to grapple with what their backers say is a growing problem: the concentration of the state's population in the Portland metro area that ensures measures can qualify for the statewide ballot without say from the rest of Oregon.

"This should be more representative from all of Oregon to gather those signatures," said **state Sen. Todd Nash, R-Enterprise**. "Right now, we're not seeing that shape up that way. It's coming from one concentrated area."

The proposals considered Monday would each create new hurdles to landing a measure on the ballot. Under House Joint Resolution 3, which is solely sponsored by Republicans, petitions would need to overcome the 6% or 8% signature thresholds in each of Oregon's 36 counties to qualify for the ballot.

This would help ensure that only broadly palatable proposals are considered, Nash said.

The proposal has sponsors in both parties, and saw support Monday from groups that lobby for farmers, businesses and hunters. Preston Mann, a lobbyist for Oregon Business and Industries, called the state's initiative petition laws, passed by voters in 1902, "antiquated." The current signature thresholds for ballot proposals are too low in an era where Oregon is registering far more people to vote, he said.

#### [Editorial: More automated enforcement may come to Oregon](#)

Bend Bulletin Editorial Board

Most people slow down driving through a work zone on the highway. Oregon already allows law enforcement to set up photo radar speed enforcement in such situations. But that has to be staffed in person.

[Senate Bill 711](#) would allow automated photo enforcement and directs the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Oregon State Police to set up a program to do it.

#### [Editorial: Oregon needs to pick options to stop wildfire](#)

Bend Bulletin Editorial Board

But also last year legislators tasked a work group to come up with some \$280 million for each two-year budget cycle to help pay for more wildfire prevention and suppression. Members of the Legislature are now [reviewing those ideas](#).

One option is to take the kicker — once. That might set up a principal of some \$1.8 billion. Interest on that amount, maybe \$144 million for the two-year budget cycle, could be used to help cover costs.

#### [Oregon Lawmakers Consider How Unhealthy Ocean Can Hurt Coastal Economies](#)

KXL

Two Oregon lawmakers introduced [House Bill 3786](#) that will provide the science and information needed to support a healthy ocean and vibrant coastal economies. The “Blue Economy Bill” introduced by [Representative David Gombert](#) and [Senator Dick Anderson](#) would declare a state of emergency for the waters off the Oregon coast and provide \$3 million to Oregon’s Ocean Science Fund. That money would go to the Oregon Ocean Science Trust for distribution in the form of grants for ocean and coastal science research.

**Senator Anderson** spoke to the link between the legislation and the transportation of goods. “Highway 101 is the lifeblood of Oregon’s coastal communities and their economies,” he said. “Highway 101 moves tourists, freight, and workers, and is essential for public safety services. Lack of data to predict stressors on that transportation system threatens coastal economies, public safety, and access to resources. This bill will help fund those data gaps.”

#### [Oregon Senate passes bill to raise minimum marriage age to 18](#)

*KATU | By Sana Aljobory*

The Oregon Senate has passed Senate Bill 548, a bipartisan effort to raise the minimum marriage age to 18, in a move aimed at protecting young Oregonians.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Kevin Mannix (OR-21), State Sen. David Brock Smith, (OR-1), and Sen. Janeen Sollman (OR-15) seeks to address concerns about the impact of child marriage on minors.

However, some senators expressed concerns about unintended consequences. **Sen. Robinson (OR-2)** noted, “What worries me is that there are instances in which a 17-year-old really should get married. Stable families, it’s well known that children who grow up in families with two parents do much better. There are instances where two 17 year-olds or a 17 and 18 year-old would be better off if they just went ahead and got married.”

“What will be the unintended consequences? I was a little surprised when I went to look at the law, that if you’re under 17 it only takes one parent to sign off, but there’s nothing in the law that requires two people getting married to sign a marriage license. That, I think, is a mistake.”

**Sen. Robinson** suggested the law adds a clause where the two minors planning on getting married have to get interviewed by a judge to make sure they want to get married, and he voted no because of any unintended consequences of raising the age to 18.

#### [INSIDE DOUGLAS COUNTY 3.10.25](#)

*KQEN News Radio*

Live from Salem, **State Senator David Brock Smith** covers topics including a meeting regarding the Rock Creek Hatchery, the upcoming fire season, impacts being felt on changes to Oregon’s drug laws, his top priorities for the rest of the session and more.

#### [Oregon lawmakers push bill to curb violence against nurses](#)

*KATU | By Sana Aljobory*

The proposed legislation, Senate Bill 537, seeks to safeguard both patients and providers by implementing strategies to prevent violence, support victims, and enhance transparency and accountability within healthcare settings.

The urgency of the bill is underscored by alarming [statistics](#): injuries from workplace violence in hospitals have surged by 181% between 2007 and 2022, and 92% of Oregon Nurses Association ([ONA](#)) members reported experiencing workplace violence last year.

The bill aims to address the multifaceted issue of workplace violence, which includes verbal and physical threats, stalking, and assaults that can result in severe injuries and PTSD.

#### [House Bill 3193 aims to protect Oregon farmworkers from disaster](#)

*KOIN | By Joelle Jones*

As winter storms, wildfires and drought become more common across the state, a bill aimed at protecting Oregon’s farmworkers from disaster has been floated in Salem.

During the smoke and heat dome events in 2021, Marsh said the state established a temporary fund to support farmworkers. Now, she and her fellow sponsors are pushing to make the relief permanent with \$10 million in funding from the Oregon Health Authority.

#### [\*\*Kotek Urges DEQ to Relax Advanced Clean Truck Rules for Largest Vehicles\*\*](#)

*Willamette Week* | By Nigel Jaquiss

In response to disruption in the Oregon market for large trucks, Gov. Tina Kotek wants the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to relax a key part of its new [\*\*Advanced Clean Trucks policy\*\*](#). As the Oregon Journalism Project [\*\*previously reported\*\*](#), that policy, which took effect in January, requires manufacturers and dealers to sell an escalating number of electric trucks for each diesel-powered truck they sell. The industry has struggled with the new mandate.

The nation's largest manufacturer of large trucks, Portland-based Daimler Trucks North America, temporarily halted sales of big trucks in Oregon because of the policy. In effect, Daimler could not sell enough electric trucks to comply with the state's policy, so it paused the sale of diesels.

#### [\*\*Lawsuit seeks to protect Cannon Beach residents, visitors from bacteria in local creeks, beaches\*\*](#)

*Oregon Live* | By Gosia Wozniacka

A new lawsuit alleges that the city of Cannon Beach is regularly discharging untreated human waste into its waterways, putting residents and visitors to one of Oregon's most popular beaches at risk from dangerously [\*\*high levels of fecal bacteria\*\*](#).

#### [\*\*A Wave of Attacks Hits Tesla Dealerships Nationwide—and in Oregon\*\*](#)

*Willamette Week* | By Aaron Mesh

In President Donald Trump's first term, Oregon earned a national reputation for street brawls and property destruction. The early weeks of his second term, by contrast, have been entirely placid. With one exception: attacks on electric car dealerships owned by Trump's cost-cutting billionaire adviser Elon Musk.

#### [\*\*Controversial PGE Forest Park transmission proposal wins city approval\*\*](#)

*Oregon Live* | By Gosia Wozniacka

A city of Portland hearings officer has approved [\*\*a proposal to cut down\*\*](#) more than 370 trees on about 5 acres in Forest Park to upgrade existing Portland General Electric transmission lines – despite [\*\*a searing city staff report\*\*](#) that recommended the project's denial.

PGE's proposal had touched off a months-long clash between the utility, which says it aims to meet the region's growing electricity needs, and conservationists who focused on environmental protection.

#### [\*\*Stocks slump yet again as fears grow about tariffs — and a recession\*\*](#)

*OPB* | By Maria Aspen

U.S. stock markets [\*\*fell again\*\*](#) on Monday as investors grew increasingly fearful about tariffs — and a potential recession.

#### [\*\*As Trump downplays economic fears, this data shows people feel differently\*\*](#)

*OPB* | By Scott Neuman

The [\*\*Economic Policy Uncertainty Index\*\*](#) provides a snapshot of this sentiment. It relies on news articles, tax data, and insights from the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia's Survey of Professional Forecasters to produce a metric that gauges uncertainty at the intersection of economics and politics.

Currently, the index stands at its highest level since the pandemic.

### **EDUCATION**

#### [\*\*Bill proposes new education performance metrics and interventions\*\*](#)

*KATU* | By Vasili Varlamos

A proposed bill in Oregon aims to establish new education performance metrics and accountability measures for school districts across the state.

House Speaker Julie Fahey, a Democrat, is the chief sponsor of the bill, which includes a tiered intervention system for schools failing to meet state standards.

The bill mandates that Oregon school districts track and report various performance indicators, including graduation rates, math and reading proficiency, and attendance.

Districts are required to report progress annually to the Oregon Department of Education and set performance growth targets aligned with state benchmarks. They must also identify and address performance gaps in the disaggregated data.

Senate Republicans also released a statement that said, **"Governor Kotek and Democrat leadership say they want to improve accountability in our education system, but House Bill 2009 ultimately concentrates more power within the Oregon Department of Education—an agency that has struggled to deliver results for students. If we truly want to improve education in Oregon, we should be looking at ways to empower parents, local school boards, and educators rather than consolidating control within an unelected bureaucracy that has overseen declining outcomes for years. Senate Republicans will continue pushing for real reforms that put students first, not bureaucracy."**

[State education officials would have power to intervene in struggling schools under governor's plan](#)

*Oregon Capital Chronicle | By Alex Baumhardt*

Both [House Bill 2009](#) and [Senate Bill 141](#) would bring statutory teeth to the state's education agency, which has long been treated more like a bureaucratic granting institution and source for school guidance than a regulator, and where top-down school reform has been a choice rather than a mandate for chronically underperforming districts.

Kotek's proposal, which had its first public hearing Monday afternoon, comes as Oregon students continue lagging their peers nationwide coming out of the COVID pandemic. The state's fourth graders had some of the nation's lowest scores in math and reading on a recent national assessment.

[Gov. Kotek moves to hold Oregon schools more accountable for academic outcomes](#)

*OPB | By Natalie Pate*

Kotek — along with fellow Democrats Senate President Rob Wagner and Speaker of the House Julie Fahey — pushed two complementary bills forward to legislators this week.

Under the proposed legislation, there's a ramp-up system of support. More real-time data and annual reviews would be factored in to gauge progress — data that would be available to the public. And should a school district fail to meet their metrics for two or three years, they must accept coaching from the state. If they hit four years or more, they may have to give up control of some of their money.

Ways and Means Education Subcommittee member Rep. Dwayne Yunker, R-Grants Pass, released a statement Monday, calling Kotek's school accountability plan "a wolf in sheep's clothing."

"Kotek's not fixing failing schools — she's consolidating power," Yunker said. "After years of state mandates that have lowered standards and created chaos, she now wants to usurp even more local control from school districts, disguised as 'accountability.' "

Yunker claims Kotek's efforts will bloat bureaucracy, take away local control and punish schools.

Instead, he's suggesting a competing proposal: [House Bill 3055](#), which would require schools to meet federal guidelines for standardized test participation.

[Kotek on Education Spending: "I Don't Believe in Writing a Blank Check"](#)

*Willamette Week | By Joanna Hou*

When *WW* asked Kotek for clarification on how the governor would determine which districts were struggling, given that a majority of districts in Oregon report less than half of their students as proficient in reading or mathematics, Kotek said the State Board of Education would tackle that question after the bill's passage.

[Kotek: 'Oregon students deserve more' than status quo](#)

*KOIN | By Lisa Balick*

The governor, along with House Speaker Julie Fahey and Senate President Rob Wagner, said more accountability and more student testing is needed.

The bill calls for more standardized state testing of students throughout the school year so teachers can make adjustments. The measure would require more state intervention, require coaching and support and more state involvement in how the money is spent if students in a certain district aren't measuring up.