

Oregon News

POLITICS

[Oregon bills could result in less oversight for convicted sex offenders](#)

Fox News

[Lawmakers in Oregon](#) are considering three bills that, if passed, would ease public safety requirements for convicted sex offenders and significantly downsize the state's backlog for reassessing offenders. Senate Bills 819, 820 and 821 all revolve around creating an easier process for the state Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision to classify convicted sex offenders, but the suggestions in the bills ultimately reduce the number of convicted sex offenders in the community that are being monitored.

[Listen: Oregon Republican's sex offender legislation; advice for federal workers](#)

KLCC

While they don't control the levels of power in Salem, Oregon Republicans are busy working to introduce and pass legislation they hope will garner bipartisan support. One such bill is aimed at strengthening sex offender laws and tightening up the sex offender registry rules.

[Retire at age 50? Oregon bill would allow police, firefighters, DAs to do just that](#)

Oregon Live | By Aimee Green

An Oregon bill that would lower the retirement age for thousands of police officers, firefighters and prosecutors from age 53 to 50 is gaining traction in the Legislature, with two leaders of a Senate committee indicating their bipartisan willingness Tuesday to try to shepherd it through.

[Sen. Daniel Bonham](#), committee co-chair and the Republican minority leader, even indicated his openness to finding money in the state budget to pay for the proposal, to relieve local governments from their share of the roughly \$11 million a year cost the bill would impose.

Though the bill would place a financial burden on cities, counties and fire districts to come up with more money, would cost an estimated \$3 million to implement and would create an estimated \$80 million in unfunded liability for the state's retirement system, supporters say it's necessary to keep public safety employees from leaving for California or Washington, where they say the pensions are better.

Senate Bill 902 would kick in for police, firefighters and other public safety employees at age 50 if they have at least 25 years on the job. It would grant them full benefits at that time, though their benefits would grow if they stayed on the job even longer.

Bonham, the committee's co-chair, responded that maybe statewide taxes could shoulder the financial burden.

"The state has the ability to prioritize this and say we understand your plight and your limited resources and your limited amount and ability to tax," **Bonham** said after a lobbyist for Oregon's counties said the cost would be too great. "And we (state lawmakers) have relatively unlimited capacity to tax. ... We have the ability to prioritize our budget and offset the cost."

[Oregon bill to block release of legislative research gets skeptical hearing](#)

OPB | By Dirk Vanderhardt

Research that Oregon lawmakers consider while writing changes to state law could be shielded from the public under a bill that received a hearing in a Senate committee Wednesday.

The bill would bar the state research office from releasing "the contents or nature of any research requested, collected, maintained or utilized" by the office without express written permission from the person who provided data for the research.

"LPRO is intended to be nonpartisan and unbiased and serve the Legislature as a whole," said Paloma Sparks, a lobbyist for the group. "We are concerned that this would allow work to be kept secret from the public and from other members of the Legislature."

At least one lawmaker offered a similar take. **State Sen. Kim Thatcher, R-Keizer**, said the bill "seems like more of a hatchet approach than a scalpel approach." Thatcher says she preferred the scalpel approach.

That sentiment is likely to doom SB 555 in its current form, but Mason Freeman suggested Wednesday her office might come back to lawmakers with a revamped proposal.

"We fully recognize that this concept may not be ready this session, or may need some amendments," she said.

[Cattle killed by wolves could net Oregon ranchers bigger state payouts. If Democrats defy environmentalists](#)

Oregon Live | By Carlos Fuentes

Oregon ranchers want higher payouts from the state to recoup their losses for cattle and other livestock [killed by wolves](#). But the fate of a bill that would increase those payments will be determined by whether enough Democratic lawmakers, who hold the majority in Salem, are willing to defy environmentalists and support the proposal.

For years, Oregon ranchers have complained about [wolves preying](#) on their cows, horses and other animals. Because shooting a wolf is against state hunting laws, lawmakers in 2011 agreed to compensate ranchers for the financial loss of any animal that dies following a wolf attack.

Sen. Todd Nash, a Republican from Enterprise and former president of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, introduced a bill in January that would require the state to pay ranchers at least the fair market value – and in many cases far more – for animals injured or killed by wolves. Under the bill, Oregon would have to pay seven times the market value of cow calves, sheep and goats, and three times the market value for other cows.

These multipliers, ranchers say, are necessary because wolf attacks on herds can negatively impact cattle and ranchers in many unseen ways.

Republicans and a few moderate Democrats have expressed support for the bill. But some Democrats, who have a supermajority in both chambers and will ultimately control which bills pass this session, have shown reluctance to support the proposal.

A large reason for their hesitancy: environmentalist opposition to the bill.

[St. Helens School District board approves corrective action plan after sex abuse scandal](#)

KATU | By Tanvi Varma

Members of the St. Helens school board have voted to approve a plan that aims to make school safer for students. This comes after two teachers were [charged](#) with sexual abuse of students last year, and [members of the district were accused of](#) not reporting the allegations when they learned about them.

The plan is broadly about listening to the community more. It creates a secondary school advisory council so that students can weigh in on pressing issues, and it involves having quarterly community listening sessions so that people can have ongoing dialogue with district leaders. It also includes regular meetings with the St. Helens Police Department chief, and trainings on professionalism when it comes to interacting with students.

One of Doarn's issues is that the district hasn't released the results of a third-party investigation into alleged mishandling of sex abuse allegations.

"So, personally as a parent, it's infuriating that they're going to decide not to release this report. We've been promised since, I believe, it was the end of January, which is our original date that they were going to release this, and now its release is being suspended indefinitely due to pending litigation. So I'm extremely upset about that," he said.

[Salem Cherry Blossom Day 2025: How to celebrate at Oregon's Capitol Mall](#)

Oregon Live

Saturday's free, family friendly event from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. launches 17 days of [Yozakura](#)-style nighttime viewings of cherry trees illuminated with traditional Japanese lanterns at the [State Capitol State Park](#) on the Capitol Mall across Court Street from the Capitol Building.

[Oregon looks to eliminate hidden ticket sale fees under bill](#)

Statesman Journal | By Dianne Lugo

Oregon lawmakers are pushing for more fairness and transparency in event ticket sales with a bill that would eliminate hidden fees and limit other practices in the industry.

Marsh told lawmakers HB3167 was a response to deceptive practices and hidden fees that plague the arts and entertainment market in Oregon.

The bill requires ticket sellers to disclose all fees up front, including service charges and taxes. It would ban speculative ticketing by requiring that resellers have possession or a contract to obtain the ticket before selling.

[GOP speaks out against marriage license fee increase](#)

Elkhorn Media Group

The cost of getting hitched will go up if the Oregon State Senate has its way. The Democrat supermajority voted to pass Senate Bill 97, which increases the cost of a marriage license from \$10 to \$35 a 250 percent hike.

Senate Republican Leader Daniel Bonham (R-The Dalles) blasted the plan.

“At a time when Oregonians are struggling with skyrocketing costs for housing, food, and gas, Democrats are nickel-and-diming them at every turn,” **Bonham** said. “This is death by 1,000 cuts. Whether it’s raising fees, pushing new taxes, or increasing the cost of basic services, they can’t help but make life more expensive.”

Only one Republican voted in favor of the bill. That was **Sen. Todd Nash (R-Enterprise)**. It now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

[Another Former Senior OLCC Manager Sues State Over Termination](#)

Willamette Week | By Nigel Jaquiss

Last week, Will Higlin, the agency’s former deputy director, filed suit in Marion County Circuit Court, alleging he was improperly fired on March 10, 2023. The lawsuit comes on the heels of a similar lawsuit filed by another former agency official last month.

In his lawsuit, Higlin says it was customary practice in the decade he worked at the agency for “lobbyists, elected officials, the general public, restaurateurs, and retail liquor stores” to request to purchase rare bottles of liquor, such as Pappy Van Winkle bourbon.

[Oregon farm worker protections bill sparks debate among lawmakers](#)

KOIN | By Anthony Kustura

A contentious battle is unfolding in Oregon over [House Bill 2548](#), which opponents argue could jeopardize family farms.

The bill, aimed at strengthening labor protections for agricultural workers, includes provisions like overtime pay, new labor standards, and protections against retaliation.

House Republicans, many of whom are farmers, warn that the bill could flood them with crippling regulations and legal chaos, potentially driving them out of business.

While Republicans agree on the need for health and safety standards, they push for a more balanced approach, suggesting subsidies, tax breaks, and flexible regulations to protect both workers and small farms.

House Republicans say 97% of Oregon’s farms are family-owned, and they plan to continue pushing for a balanced solution that protects both workers and small farmers.

[Oregon Secretary of State Read withdraws scandal-marred marijuana audit that led to Fagan's downfall](#)

Oregon Capital Chronicle | By Julia Shumway

New Oregon Secretary of State Tobias Read on Wednesday withdrew the scandal-marred audit of the state’s liquor and cannabis commission that ended a predecessor’s political career.

[Oregon is in the midst of an ‘unrepresented crisis.’ Why?](#)

OPB | By Lauren Dake

At the end of January, there were 4,178 individuals who didn't have an attorney statewide. The highest number of individuals in this situation are in Multnomah (1,172), Marion (756), Jackson (754), Washington (628), Douglas (253) and Coos counties (99). The numbers are constantly fluctuating, but the end-of-January numbers were an all-time high.

There were about 730 people who had been without representation for more than six months. Most of the people waiting for counsel are not currently in jail. But, at the end of January, there were 191 people in custody who didn't have an attorney.

This crisis impacts victims, who may fear for their safety and struggle to find closure when criminal cases are delayed. It also impacts the defendants, who may lose their jobs or housing, their ability to travel or even their kids while their legal status is in limbo.

In 2018, [a report by the Sixth Amendment Center, a nonpartisan nonprofit, found that Oregon's system of state public defense is so bureaucratic](#) and structurally flawed it couldn't guarantee clients were getting the legal defense required.

The report said the state lacked oversight of the public defenders it contracts with and noted the pay structure didn't encourage quality representation, but rather pushed attorneys to deal with cases as quickly as possible.

[In 2023, lawmakers made substantive changes to the system.](#) But even at the time, legislators and advocates knew bigger changes were needed.

[**Oregon appeals court upholds limits on police video recording of protests**](#)

OPB | By Troy Brynerson

On Wednesday, the Oregon Court of Appeals upheld an earlier ruling that it is illegal for Oregon police to livestream a protest for any reason other than to document a crime.

[**Think Out Loud: In Southern Oregon, farmworker and immigrant rights group prepares for shifting immigration policies**](#)

OPB | By Elizabeth Castillo

About 120,000 immigrants lacking permanent legal status live in Oregon, according to a 2022 estimate from the [Pew Research Center](#). The [state](#) has sanctuary laws in place, meaning that state and local resources are not used for federal immigration enforcement. Law enforcement officials in places including [Marion, Polk](#) and [Jackson](#) counties have told local media outlets they will continue to follow state laws on immigration enforcement.

[**Oregon lawmakers target hidden 'facility fees' contributing to higher medical costs**](#)

Oregon Live | By Kristine de Leon

Oregon lawmakers are considering a bill to rein in the soaring costs of medical care by cracking down on a little-known line item that's increasingly showing up on patients' bills.

[Senate Bill 539](#) takes aim at facility fees, which are the extra charges that hospitals and health systems tack on to a patient's bill.

Facility fees were originally designed to help hospitals cover overhead costs associated with maintaining emergency departments and inpatient care — costs that have escalated since the pandemic because of an influx of sicker patients.

SB 539 would limit the types of care such fees can be added to, and the settings where such fees can be charged. For example, it would prohibit hospitals from charging facility fees for most outpatient and routine office visits in hospital-owned clinics, as well as certain types of care delivered on a hospital campus.

[**Top Oregon Youth Authority investigator ignored thousands of abuse reports over years, records show**](#)

Oregon Live | By Noelle Crombie

The Oregon Youth Authority's former chief of investigations failed to [review his unit's investigations](#) into an estimated 3,000 abuse complaints spanning seven years, according to records released Thursday.

[**An Oregon school board reverses course on a pledge to support immigrant students**](#)

Oregon Live | By Julia Silverman

After two weeks of tumult, school board members in Woodburn — where 87% of students are Latino, the highest of any Oregon school district — have [reversed themselves and supported a resolution](#) expressing support for the privacy and rights of immigrant and refugee students.

[Portland eyes tapping flush clean energy fund, again, as budget shortfall looms](#)

Oregon Live | By Gosia Wosniacka

Amid a staggering budget gap, Portland leaders are again eyeing the city's one-of-a-kind clean energy fund — still awash with cash — to help.

As they weigh firing hundreds of workers and reducing programs to close a combined [\\$150 million shortfall](#) across city agencies, City Councilor Eric Zimmerman believes the climate money stash should act as [a city contingency fund](#).

The fund's current balance of over \$920 million includes more than \$580 million set aside to pay for projects in future years and Zimmerman wants to put some of that unused portion to work now.

Any move to divert the money would likely stretch the limit of what the fund was intended to do when 65% of Portland voters passed it in 2018. Since then, the fund has generated nearly seven times more annually than originally projected.

[Editorial: Fight in Oregon Legislature over water transfers](#)

Bend Bulletin Editorial Board

There are three bills in the Legislature this session in a tug-of-war over water right transfers.

Two Senate bills add more layers of scrutiny to water rights transfers. [Senate Bill 427](#) would prohibit the transfer of water if it diminishes stream flow. [Senate Bill 1153](#) would require a look at if a water rights transfer will result in loss of habitat. [House Bill 3501](#), which had a hearing on Monday, is a kind of pushback against those two.

Many transfer applications can take months or years to move through the state approval process. So adding any additional reviews or complexity must be looked at carefully.

[Things amiss in Oregon's care of children](#)

Bend Bulletin Editorial Board

There is a big gap between the number of children who need inpatient behavioral health treatment and those who get treatment. From January to February, there were 208 children referred to inpatient treatment in Oregon. Only 68 got in.

"Oregon ranks 51st in the nation for access to youth behavioral health care," reads [House Bill 3835](#).

"Oregon has the second highest rate of juvenile justice commitment in the country."