

Big week in Salem

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OREGON STATE REPRESENTATIVE NEWS FROM BARBARA SMITH WARNER

Constituents, Advocates, and Readers:

These last few weeks have seen a big surge in activity here in the Oregon Legislature. Just last night we had our penultimate discussion on the Student Success Act, which will invest \$1 Billion more in Oregon's PreK-12 education system every year (more details on that later in the newsletter). There's been important forward motion on HB 3063, a public health bill to end non-medical exemptions for vaccines; on gun violence prevention bills to protect victims of domestic violence and stalking; and a big step closer to ending a multi-million, unnecessary tax break for large telecommunications companies. And that's just the start of the list -- here's what you need to know from the past two weeks in Salem:

CONSTITUENT INFORMATION

Successful Town Hall last weekend!

Thanks to the constituents and advocates who came to join me, Senator Dembrow and Rep. Keny-Guyer for our mid-session town hall. We had lively discussions about education funding, revenue reform, campaign finance, and environmental legislation like Clean Energy Jobs.



CAPITOL UPDATES

Constituent and Advocate Visits

I was honored to host opening ceremony performer Belise Nishimwe this week for her powerful recital of the poem "Worth" by Marilyn Nelson. Belise is a constituent and a sophomore at St. Mary's Academy, and this year's "Poetry Out Loud" State Champion. She will represent Oregon in the national finals this weekend, where she will do our state and all of its citizens proud.





These past two weeks I've had the pleasure to meet with higher education advocates and trustees, AFSCME constituents and members, and constituents passionate about small donor elections.

I also sat down with Bars to Bridges team members, public transit safety advocates, school counselors, and many others. The people who take time out of their busy lives to come to Salem and share their perspectives are one of the best parts of my job - thank you.



Portland Thorns fans take the Capitol!

It's almost here! Come join us next week at the Capitol on May 2nd to watch the vote in the House on my resolution to honor the Thorns! We are expecting some very special VIP guests from the team to join us here in Salem for the floor session, and there will likely be a meet-and-greet opportunity for superfans who come to Salem. It should be an all-around fun morning. Kids are welcome.

The plan is that we'll gather at 10:30 AM, watch the House convene at 11:00 AM, and the vote should be finished by 11:30 AM. Wear your flashiest Thorns gear!



Interesting bill updates:

HB 2883 and HB 2509 are two environmental bills which passed out of the House this week. I am a co-sponsor of each of these bills and voted in support of their passage. HB 2883 prohibits polystyrene take-out containers and cups at food establishments, while HB 2509 prohibits retail establishments from providing single-use plastic bags with limited exceptions. These two bills are important measures to protect and reserve the viability and natural beauty of Oregon for generations to come.

HB 2593 passed through the House with unanimous support. I'm a chief sponsor of this bill because I know how important it is to support new and soon-to-be mothers in their transitions in and out of the workforce. No woman should be denied an equal opportunity to seek employment based on a pregnancy or nursing needs. This bill explicitly provides guidelines for employers to provide accommodations for nursing mothers and expand protections for pregnant employees.

HB 2395 also passed through the House this week with bipartisan support. This bill requires manufacturers to update devices with stronger security protections in order to ensure that information stored on these devices are not easily accessible, disclosed, or destroyed without consent of the owner. Technology is changing so rapidly, and we need to ensure that companies are adjusting with those changes as well. Consumers expect a certain level of privacy within their devices, and this bill aims to ensure that accountability is in place when that is not the case.

MY PRIORITIES

Student Success Act – HB 3427

After more than a year of work, nearly 3,000 miles traveled across Oregon, and 77 school visits, the Joint Committee on Student Success is preparing to pass the landmark Student Success Act at the start of next week.

Oregon's K-12 schools have been chronically underfunded for 30 years. Large class sizes, low graduation rates, gaps in mental health and other needed services, and too little instruction time reflect years of insufficient and unstable funding. The Student Success Act seeks to build a model public education system in Oregon through a dedicated, sustainable investment that ties funding to outcomes, requires ongoing accountability and closes the opportunity gaps for historically underserved students.

This legislation is the result of what we learned when we toured communities all over the state in 2018 to talk, listen and learn about what's going on in our schools. The Student Success Act will begin to fulfill the promises we've made to future generations to Oregon's kids the education they deserve.



The Student Success Act (HB 3427) establishes the Student Success Fund, which will be strictly dedicated to supporting Oregon's public pre-kindergarten through 12th grade education system. The fund is targeted at three areas: early childhood investments, school improvement and statewide investments. The Joint Committee on Student Success has proposed a corporate activities tax that will add stability to

school funding and make critically needed, specific and accountable investments through the Student Success Fund.

The Student Success Act will create unprecedented investment in early childhood education, make accountable investments for all school districts, build a more equitable education system and provide additional services that students need to succeed. Among the specific initiatives targeted by the legislation are smaller class sizes, full funding of career and technical education (Measure 98), increased access to high quality preschool and early childhood programs, universal access to meals, services for students with disabilities, and mental and behavioral health support.

The Student Success Act will finally set Oregon on a path to make strategic new investments in our schools and support a strong, equitable economy that will create a brighter future for students, families, communities and businesses across the state. We are at a critical point in our state's history and can't let another generation of Oregonians go through an underfunded system. The time is now for these investments in our students.

Safe Storage for Firearms – SB 978

Senate Bill 978, the omnibus gun safety bill, is currently in the Senate Rules Committee awaiting amendments. I continue to advocate for the strongest version of the safe storage language, because the safety of Oregonians is in the balance. I look forward to voting on this important legislation as soon as possible. Thank you to all of the activists and advocates who have shared your stories relating to SB 978 - please continue to monitor and support it!

Adi's Act: Suicide Prevention in Oregon Schools – SB 52

Adi's Act, which already passed the Senate, is now moving through the House with a hearing last week and a committee vote scheduled shortly. We know that our schools can play a powerful role in the mental health and safety of students, and this bill will require school districts to create suicide prevention plans to help ensure that every student in Oregon can see a future for themselves. This bill is a priority for Basic Rights Oregon, and I am honored to be a chief sponsor on behalf of Adi's family and all of Oregon's students.

Oil Trains - HB 2209

The 2019 oil train safety bill is in the Ways and Means Committee, awaiting a public hearing and vote. This bill is an important step forward to institute the necessary emergency planning and environmental protections to help keep railroads in check and keep Oregon communities safer. The programs from this bill are funded by a fee imposed on the railroads. I am working with my colleagues to get this passed as soon as possible in this session.

End the Gigabit Exemption - HB 2684

I believe that broadband access is the rural electrification of the 21st century. It is essential for communities in rural Oregon to be able to survive and thrive and participate in the global economy, and I strongly support efforts to make it widely and affordably available. But the gigabit exemption tax break is not part of that solution. I'm glad that my colleagues voted unanimously to pass HB 2684 to end this policy in the cleanest and fairest way we can, saving important state funds for other uses.

What a big two weeks -- here's to the next two!

Sincerely,

Barbara

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