

# Our Pledge to Every Oregonian



## 2019 Legislative Successes

The Oregon House Democrats began the session with a “Pledge to Every Oregonian,” committing to tackle some of the state’s biggest challenges. The legislative successes from this historic session will help build a future where everyone has access to the best Oregon has to offer. Here are some of the major highlights:

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### Investing in Quality Public Education

**Student Success Act:** The Student Success Act (HB 3427) provides \$1 billion per year to make unprecedented investments in early childhood education, build a more equitable education system, and provide additional services in every single school district that students need to succeed. This investment package was the product of a year-long bipartisan process to build a model public education system in Oregon through a dedicated, sustainable revenue stream that ties funding to outcomes.

**K-12 School Funding:** In addition to the Student Success Act, the legislature passed a record K-12 budget, investing \$9 billion in the State School Fund. This represents a 9.7% increase over the 2017-19 State School Fund.

**Safe Classrooms for All:** K-12 public school students and staff were at risk due to laws that severely restricted the instances in which a professional educator could intervene to keep students safe from physical harm. SB 963 provides much-needed clarification about circumstances in which protective physical intervention may be used. The bill also expressly prohibits using outmoded and dangerous types of restraint and adds teeth to existing requirements that schools log and report every instance of physical intervention to make sure it is not applied disproportionately.

**Higher Education Funding:** The Legislature supported a \$2.2 billion budget to for community colleges and public universities. It includes a significant increase in Oregon’s need-based financial aid program, the Oregon Opportunity Grant, that will help 2,500 more students afford to go to college.

**Youth Suicide Prevention:** SB 52, Adi’s Act, provides each Oregon school district with a model suicide prevention policy and requires that each district have a policy in place. The need is pressing: in 2017, the Oregon Health Authority found that nearly half of lesbian, gay or bisexual 8<sup>th</sup> graders have contemplated suicide and almost a third of transgender 8<sup>th</sup> graders have attempted suicide.

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### Fighting for the Right to Health Care

**Protecting Medicaid:** HB 2010 fully funds Oregon’s share of financial responsibility for the state Medicaid program, known as the Oregon Health Plan, for six years. The Oregon Health Plan covers 1.1 million Oregonians, including low-income adults, adults with disabilities, the aging and disabled population, and hundreds of thousands of low- and moderate-income children.

**Decreasing Tobacco Use and Adding Funding:** HB 2270 refers to voters an increase in the state’s tobacco tax and implements a new excise tax on e-cigarettes and other “vape” devices. Revenues from these taxes will further fund health care for underserved populations and tobacco cessation services.

**Mental Health:** This year’s budget invests \$97 million to improve statewide mental and behavioral health, including nearly \$10 million in IMPACT grants to support people with mental illness and/or substance use disorders who cycle through the emergency room, courts, and jails; over \$7 million to increase the state’s capacity for community restoration services to help address the statewide Aid and Assist crisis; and \$10 million in suicide prevention funding.

**Tackling the Opioid Epidemic:** HB 2257 acknowledges that substance use disorder is a chronic illness and takes a multifaceted approach to Oregon’s opioid crisis. HB 3273 establishes a statewide drug takeback program.

**Reducing the Cost of Prescription Drugs:** HB 2185 takes on pharmacy benefit managers and ensures small, local pharmacies have equal footing. HB 2658 requires at least 60-days-notice when a pharmaceutical manufacturer raises prices by 10% on a high cost drug.

**Charity Care:** HB 3076 ensures hospitals who receive millions of dollars in tax breaks due to their non-profit status are actually earning their tax break by providing a minimum standard of community benefit. This bill prohibits malicious collections practices for medical debt.

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## Combating Climate Change

**Oregon Climate Action Program:** HB 2020, the Oregon Climate Action Program, remains unfinished business after passing the Oregon House but failing in the Oregon Senate. Oregon House Democrats are committed to tackling the devastating effects of climate change while ensuring our state has the resources it needs to build a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. This legislation would have created a market-based carbon pricing program that guarantees that the state will meet its greenhouse gas reduction goals while also strengthening Oregon's economy.

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## Supporting Affordable Housing and Safer Communities

**Tenant Protections:** SB 608 provides critical protections for Oregon renters by establishing a just-cause eviction standard and prohibiting extreme rent increases. A landlord may only terminate a tenancy for-cause after the first 12 months of occupancy and may not increase a tenant's rent by more than 7% + consumer price index in a 12-month period, along with other protections.

**Investments in Affordable Housing:** The legislature passed more than \$350 million in funding for renter resources, homeless services and prevention, affordable housing preservation, and housing supply and home ownership.

**Reasonable Tenant Screening:** SB 484 limits landlords to a single applicant screening charge per applicant and requires landlords to refund the screening fee to applicants who were not selected. SB 970 prohibits landlords from considering minor marijuana convictions or possession of medical marijuana when evaluating applicants.

**"Missing Middle" Housing:** HB 2001 provides more housing choices for Oregon families by lifting local bans on smaller, less expensive housing options like duplexes, triplexes, quads, cottage clusters, and townhomes. Local jurisdictions can regulate the siting and design of these housing types to ensure that they fit into each unique community.

**Housing Preservation:** HB 2896 appropriates \$15 million to Oregon Housing and Community services to preserve manufactured home parks and replace unsafe and unhealthy manufactured homes with more energy efficient homes for low-income residents. HB 2002 expands laws regarding preservation of publicly supported housing to ensure that existing affordable housing remains affordable for many years to come.

**Firearm Removal for Stalkers and Domestic Abusers:** HB 2013 closes the "restraining order loophole" in current firearm prohibition statute and creates protocols by which the courts and law enforcement can ensure that people who have domestic violence convictions or stalking or restraining orders do not in fact possess firearms.

**Workplace Fairness Act:** SB 726 helps level the playing field for workers by improving workplace protections to combat harassment. This includes extending the statute of limitations in employment situations from 1 to 5 years, preventing employers from requiring non-disclosure agreements or no-rehire provisions, and directing BOLI to help create policies and procedures for both employers and employees.

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## Defending Our Environment

**Oregon Environmental Protection Act:** HB 2250 sets a "baseline federal standard" of environmental law protections as those that were in effect on January 19, 2017 when President Obama left office. The bill requires DEQ and OHA to regularly assess final changes to federal environmental law to determine whether the changes are significantly less protective of public health, the environment, or natural resources than baseline federal standards.

**Offshore Drilling Ban:** SB 256 makes permanent the ban on exploration or drilling for oil, gas and sulfur off the Oregon coast. The Legislature originally adopted the ban in 2007 and later extended the policy until January 1, 2020.

**Hydraulic Fracturing Ban:** HB 2623 imposes a statewide moratorium on hydraulic fracturing until January 2, 2025.

**Ditching Dirty Diesel:** HB 2007 takes a meaningful first step to curb Oregon’s dirty diesel problem. This bill phases out pre-2010 medium duty registrations and pre-2007 heavy duty truck registrations in the Portland-metro area. It also prioritizes owner-operators and small businesses in accessing the Volkswagen Settlement funds to encourage earlier adoption of cleaner, newer trucks.

**Reducing Plastic Waste:** SB 90 prohibits a food and beverage provider or a convenience store from providing single-use plastic straws unless requested by the consumer. HB 2509 prohibits retail establishments and restaurants in Oregon from providing single-use plastic checkout bags to customers and requires them to collect at least a 5-cent fee per recycled paper or cloth bag.

**Oil Train Disaster Planning:** HB 2209 requires railroads that own or operate high hazard train routes to institute oil spill contingency plans and to have those plans reviewed and approved by DEQ and outlines a triennial schedule for training for response to high hazard oil train spills.

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### Strengthening Our Economy

**Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance:** HB 2005 establishes a state-run paid family and medical leave insurance program for every employee in the state. The program provides up to 12 weeks of paid leave, with an additional 2 paid weeks for birth parents, to bond with a new child, care for an individual’s serious illness, care for a family member’s serious illness, or take safe leave related to a domestic violence situation.

**State Income Tax Reduction:** HB 3427 includes provisions to lower Oregon’s income tax brackets by 0.25%.

**Public Worker Protections:** HB 2016 codifies best practices in Oregon’s collective bargaining statutes, allowing designated representatives reasonable work time to fulfill their duties, requiring employers to provide unions with reasonable communication access with employees in the bargaining unit, expanding the list of unfair labor practices, and clarifying methods of member dues collection.

**Economic Development Funding:** The legislature directed nearly \$1.5 million to support economic development throughout Oregon, with targeted investments in rural parts of the state. In addition, the legislature allocated \$581 million for Business Oregon’s Infrastructure Division for municipal infrastructure, water and wastewater facilities that ensure compliance with federal law, seismic rehabilitation for schools and emergency facilities, port and airport facilities, levee improvements, marine navigation improvements, and other facilities that support economic and community development.

**Innovation Research Fund:** This year’s budget invests \$10 million to help Oregon universities pull in additional research dollars to make them more competitive nationally and improve Oregon’s workforce.

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### Ensuring Government is Responsible and Effective

**Dark Money Reform:** Before the passage of HB 2983, non-profit organizations could contribute virtually unlimited amounts of money to campaigns, allowing organizations to take partisan political actions while concealing who is paying for them and maintaining their tax-exempt status. HB 2983 provides transparency into these independent expenditures by requiring organizations that make political communications in excess of specified amounts (e.g., \$25,000 per legislative race) to disclose information related to donations that exceed \$10,000.

**Campaign Contribution Limits:** HB 2714 enacts limits on campaign contributions that may be accepted by candidates and political committees. It requires political committees to identify as caucus, measure, multicandidate, political party, recall or small donor political committee, and prohibits individuals from controlling more than one of each committee.

**Ending the Lobby “Revolving Door”:** HB 2595 updates Oregon’s “revolving door” statute to prohibit former legislators from receiving compensation for lobbying for one year after the member ceases to hold office.

**Oregon Voting Rights Act:** HB 3310 A creates a state law similar to Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which prohibits the denial or abridgment of the right to vote on account of certain immutable characteristics. The prohibition applies to school districts, education service districts, and community college districts, providing both a cause of action and a mechanism by which district boards may modify their election systems.

**National Popular Vote:** SB 870 enacts the Interstate Compact for Agreement Among the States to Elect the President by National Popular Vote.

**Public Records Transparency:** HB 2353 allows the Attorney General, a district attorney, or a court to require a public body to pay a penalty of \$200 for failing to respond to a public records request in a timely manner.

**Paid Postage:** SB 861 requires the state to provide every Oregon voter with a postage paid return envelope for their ballot beginning in 2020.

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### **Seeking Access to Justice and Equal Rights for All**

**Driver's Licenses for All:** HB 2015, the Equal Access to Roads Act, allows all Oregon residents who pass written and driving tests, pay the fees, and provide proof of identity and residency to get a standard driver's license.

**Boosted Funding for Public Defense in Oregon:** The legislature passed an additional \$20 million in funding for the Office of Public Defense Services, to be used to stabilize caseloads and begin to ensure a constitutional level of defense.

**Supporting Our Veterans:** The Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs will receive a 24% increase of the 2017-19 Legislatively Approved Budget and a 175% increase over the 2015-17 Legislatively Approved Budget for veterans' services.

**Youth Justice Reform:** SB 1008 reformed mandatory minimum sentence laws for youth offenders to ensure that 15, 16 and 17-year-olds have a chance at redemption and rehabilitation. The legislation eliminates the automatic waiver of children into the adult criminal justice system; makes all children eligible for a "second look" hearing halfway through their sentence; creates "transfer hearings" before children are moved into the adult prison system; and prohibits sentencing a child to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.

**Strengthening Hate Crimes Law:** SB 577, the strongest hate crimes legislation in the nation, makes changes to the crime of intimidation, including renaming it "bias crime," and defining a bias incident, specifically making it a crime to commit a violent offense or the immediate threat of violence based on a person's membership in a protected class. The legislation also adds gender identity in the category of perceived characteristics of person against whom a bias crime can be committed.

**Improving Child Welfare:** The legislature allocated an addition \$176 million to reduce caseloads and provide social services to children in need, which allow 347 additional frontline workers to be hired.

**Elder Care:** This year's budget invested \$31.6 million in Aging and People with Disability (APD) programs to keep up with facility oversight; address workload issues in local APD offices; and increase rates for long-term care service providers to ensure they are meeting the needs of people in their care.

**Refugee Resettlement Support:** Historically, Oregon has funded refugee services with federal funds. However, the state received notice that the Trump Administration will suspend these funds, so HB 2508 appropriates \$2 million General Fund to award grants that support refugee resettlement agencies, including \$200,000 for a culturally responsive employment service provider. The funding will serve approximately 900 refugees.

**Legal Services for Immigrants:** This year's budget includes \$2 million to support a state-level investment in legal support for immigrants who are facing detention or deportation. This funding will prevent family separation and maintain community stability.

**Support for Oregonians with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD):** This year's budget invests \$30 million increase to provide meaningful increases in wages for direct support providers to reduce turnover and provide better continuity of care. SB 491 invests \$6.3 million to provide housing for individuals with I/DD.