



Legislative Report

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Background Check Bill Still Alive

[SB 1551](#), which would close critical loopholes in current background check legislation, has been sent to Senate Rules in one last attempt to garner votes for passage. The League delivered supportive [testimony](#), along with fellow members of the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Gun Violence, during an emotional and well-publicized hearing in Senate Judiciary on February 6. Since then Committee Chair Floyd Prozanski has put forth several amendments to counter the objections of opponents, including the "dash-9," which would allow the Oregon State Police to share the names of those who fail a background check with local law enforcement.



*Marge Easley, Social
Policy: Gun Safety*

Studies have shown that background checks are an effective deterrent to gun violence and do save lives in states that enact strong laws. Recent polling has shown that 78% of Oregonians favor universal background checks. However, like last session, legislators claim they are receiving thousands of emails from opponents, and many are reluctant to put their political futures on the line. Thus, Senator Prozanski is also looking at two other options: a legislative referral or passage of a bill with just the content of the "dash-9" amendment.

Negotiations are ongoing on [SB 1551](#), so please stay tuned for a possible **action alert in the very near future.**

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Public Access

We are Being Heard: One Hour Notice Before Votes

Early in the session the Senate made an important rules

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change. Senators are now required to post all amendments to bills at least one hour before a committee can vote on them. No longer can an amendment be pulled from a Senator's folder and voted on immediately and without public input. This has long been an area of concern to the League and we are very pleased that they were listening to us and others.



*Paula Krane,
Public Access
Coordinator*

The House did not adopt this rule and we must continue to advocate for this additional level of transparency for us, the public. Contact your State Representative and encourage them to change their rules next session to also have the one hour notice. Also, thank your state Senator for this rules change, and encourage them to continue this rule in future sessions.

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Natural Resources

Regional Solutions: HB 2620 (2013) turns into HB 4015

Members of the League participated in the public opportunity to learn more about the Governor's [Regional Solutions Program](#) and to provide input as this program becomes more important to local economic and community development.



*Peggy Lynch, Natural
Resources
Coordinator*

When [HB 4015](#) was introduced, the bill required that all grants and loan programs give priority to a list of "Regional Priorities". The League objected. With partners, a -7 amendment was adopted in House Rural Communities and moved to Ways and Means, since the 2013 Oregon Business Development Department's budget included \$10 million in lottery bonds for these Priorities. Yet, no criteria was adopted to allocate them, as requested by the Legislative Fiscal Office. See [Report](#).

The League will continue to follow the bill this session, and the changes in service delivery around Regional Solutions in the long run. A promise of a -8 amendment that would remove a requirement of state agencies working on Regional Priorities without additional staffing should be adopted in Ways and Means. We are most concerned that the demand on our natural resource program staff will be greater than their capacity to also protect our clean air, land and water.

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Oregon Legislative Action 2014

Senators sent the House
37 Bills to consider
The House sent
61 measures to the
upper chamber

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Oregon House so far
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Bills passed by the
Oregon Senate so far
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OLIS

The Oregon Legislature Information System has been redesigned and has been recording hearings and providing information on bills and information submitted to the legislature.

The legislative staff is to

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Blurring the Lines Between State and County Parks

When you stay at a park, do you know if it is owned/managed by Oregon Parks or the local county? For many users, it's the experience and location and not the park ownership that's



important. The State of Oregon collects fees from recreational vehicle owners to help pay for maintenance of parks. Currently the allocation is 65% to the [Oregon Parks and Recreation Department](#) (OPRD) and 35% to counties.

As a result of an agreement among many parties, [SB 1514](#) has moved to Ways and Means to increase the allocation to county parks for 2014 to 40% (meaning a \$1.1 million reduction in state parks revenue). The proposal would increase that allocation to 45% for 2015 which is a \$4.7 million estimated reduction. However, that increase to county parks would begin to address their over \$80 million in maintenance backlog. (It should be noted that all lottery dollars are currently projected to decrease over time so programs that rely on this funding source will be affected.)

Separately, these entities are also identifying county and state parks that could be more efficiently managed by another jurisdiction. (Currently, 8 parks have been identified for further discussion.) There are state parks near county parks and vice versa. It may provide operations and maintenance savings if owned or managed by only one jurisdiction. Regional Recreation Coalitions are to be formed to continue this discussion. If parks are of interest to you, contact [OPRD](#) to let your interest be known.

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Water is a Critical Issue

You have all read about California's drought. Even with the current weather events, Oregon is also experiencing [drought conditions](#). In the Klamath basin, with the recognition that the Klamath tribes have the most senior water rights with time immemorial as a certificated date, a number of bills were discussed ([HB 4044](#), [HB 4064](#) and [SB 1572](#)). Mostly bills we would not have supported due to the policy and fiscal cost, they did provide an opportunity for wonderful tutorials on water law. The League shared our two [water studies](#) with new legislators. They continue to be a resource.

be commended for the redesign and its transparency for this short session.
Thank You!

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TAKE ACTION
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Contact the IRS

The Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources heard a report on the status of [SB 839](#) (2013), the water storage bill. As part of that bill, the Willamette and Deschutes Basin Water Studies are to be funded, but advocates have asked the 2014 Legislature to specifically provide a budget note for up to \$750,000 for the Deschutes study, and up to \$1.5 million for the Willamette study. The dollars will be matched by federal dollars to consider how best to deal with storage in these basins.

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Land Use Again a Target

The League worked with partners to defeat a number of bad land use bills. See [Solar Incentives article](#) and [testimony](#) on [SB 1578](#).

[SB 1575](#) was an attempt by one property owner to allow a particular manufacturing use on forestlands. As with the Clackamas County local hearing, parties on both sides came to the Legislature to testify as if it were a local hearing. The bill died in Committee.

Again this session, a bill ([HB 4092](#)) that would allow unlimited industrial lands to be added to Mallheur County was filed. The League provided oral testimony against because the City of Ontario has added significant lands and the City of Vale is in the process of also adding lands under the appropriate local land use process. The bill died in Committee.

After listening to the various arguments on the Metro Urban Growth Boundary bill ([HB 4078](#)), we provided written [testimony](#) in support of the judicial system to continue to adjudicate the issues under the current public process.



This bill has been moved to House Rules as legislators seek to find a compromise. Of special interest is the discussion around the urban/rural reserves policy and how that law was implemented in Washington County. On February 20, the Oregon Court of Appeals issued an opinion in this case.

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Budgets

The League continues to follow the natural resource agency budgets. Oregon Conservation Network (OCN) provided a letter to the Ways and Means Co-Chairs requesting a few

Tell them to PROTECT the League's voter service work and STOP dark money from polluting our elections.

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budget adjustments, but recognizing the status of the statewide budget. With the latest Revenue Forecast, we expect only 0.25-0.5% of the 2013 2% holdback on agency budgets to be released for natural resources. Other expenses, including the \$40 million additional cost for fighting the 2013 fires, demand these funds.

The Governor will continue to focus on his [10-year budget plan](#) for 2015, but some of the processes used for the 2013 budget development such as the "buying teams" have been abandoned. We are awaiting further direction as we engage with our OCN partners and individual agencies on budget priorities.

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Bees, Toxics and GMOs

The League's Oregon Conservation Network (OCN) partners worked on a number of bills of interest to members: [HB 4139](#), [SB 1511](#), [SB 1569](#) and [HB 4100](#). More information on these bills are on Oregon Legislative Information System (OLIS).



A budget request for the Department of Agriculture for \$125,000 to fund the Governor's Task Force on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) will be considered during budget reconciliation.

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Scenic Waterways

With direction from the Governor and the Legislature, Oregon Parks and Recreation (OPRD) is setting up a process to consider additional rivers and streams to be designated as Scenic Waterways. See Governor's [letter](#) and OPRD [presentation](#).

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Parks Property Exchange Changing

On February 20, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission will meet by phone to consider purchase of the Grouse Mountain Ranch near John Day, Oregon. Due to a number of issues that have arisen (including that the Bandon property was given to the state by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management as a "park"), the decision on the proposal by Bandon Biota to purchase park property near Bandon for another golf course has been postponed until their April meeting. See [Agenda](#).

The Grouse Mountain proposed purchase led to the introduction of [SB 1554](#) that would have allowed counties to reject property purchases or conservation easements if they would reduce school property taxes. It died in committee.

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Streamside Buffers on Forest Lands

Existing Forest Practices Act stream buffers provide shade to help keep stream water cold, a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality requirement. The Forestry Board determined the available science supports further examining three methods to meet the requirement and directed the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) to further investigate these three streamside harvest management methods. The Board relies on [public input](#) and the three [Regional Forest Practice Committees](#) for advice to help develop balanced, effective forest practice rules.



This spring, the Board may approve new streamside buffer standards and direct ODF to draft final rules for future consideration. For additional information contact: Marganne Allen at mallen@odf.state.or.us.

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Decision on Coastal Nonpoint Pollution



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced in December they are disapproving Oregon's program to address polluted runoff along the Oregon Coast. The League has consistently asked the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and the Legislature to address failing septic systems along the coast. We noted this concern in our recent [Coastal Report](#).

Public comments should be sent by March 21 to joelle.gore@noaa.gov. The League is concerned about the loss of \$4 million in federal dollars and believes that Oregon has done much to address this issue, but more must be done. We expect to provide comments, but individual comments are also welcome.

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Energy/Climate/Transportation

Solar Incentives: Always Under Attack

In 2007, a bill that has come to be called "1.5% for Green Technology" was passed as to aid the solar industry. Local and state government bodies were required to set aside 1.5% of the cost of certain public building construction contracts to fund solar technology. In 2012, the law was extended to include geothermal energy.



*Theresa Gibney,
Natural Resources
Volunteer*

This session, the -4 amendment to [SB 1578](#) seeks to extend the 1.5% funding to all renewable energy, including burning biomass to heat or to generate electricity. The League has remained neutral on the -4 amendments, which were adopted. [SB 1578](#) will head next to the Senate floor for approval.

The League [testified](#) against the -5 and -6 amendments; these would have established an unhealthy incentive for local governments to set aside "1.5% for Green Technology" funds for five years and then petition move them into the general fund for general fund purposes. See [League testimony](#) to understand how this complex mechanism could have worked.

Note: The League opposed the original [SB 1578](#), which was introduced as a bill that gave special priority to projects in counties with over 7% unemployment and exempted these projects from all kinds of permitting requirements. These concepts were dead on arrival at the public hearing, with limited testimony provided in support.

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Safer Transport of Crude Oil

The League also submitted [testimony](#) in support of [HJM 201](#), a resolution asking Congress to increase standards for new and existing rail tank cars carrying crude oil to match standards for other tank cars carrying flammable substances, on an expedited basis.



This bill passed the House (58-2) and was referred to the

Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee. Committee materials include an interesting map of rail lines in Oregon and show just how many small towns and large population centers could be at risk.

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A Climate Change Adaptation Infrastructure Idea: Improved

The League started the short session opposed to [HB 4111](#). As introduced, [HB 4111](#) would have advanced public/private financing of much needed public infrastructure but without the technical/financial controls and Legislative oversight the League believes to be necessary. The League submitted [testimony](#) in nominal support of the -2 amendments, which call for an all-volunteer Commission to lead pilot programs of this public/private financing and report to the Legislature.

The League testimony called for:

- a) expert technical/financial oversight and
- b) a priority for climate change adaptation infrastructure as principles included for project selection in legislation that the Commission may recommend for introduction in 2015.

[HB 4111](#) passed the House (48-4-5-3) and will move on to a Senate Committee.

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Clean Energy Works Lottery Funding: Revisited



As reported in the League's 2013 End-of-Session report, Clean Energy Works of Oregon (CEWO) - a non-profit focused on one-stop-shopping for residential energy efficiency upgrades - was allocated nearly \$10 million in the 2013 'Christmas tree' lottery bill. Governor Kitzhaber struck \$4.8 million of this \$10 million by line item veto, because these funds had been derived from a sweep of agency-held ratepayer dollars (not taxpayer dollars), but he committed to seek funds to replace this \$4.8 million before the 2015 session.

CEWO made a presentation to the Joint Ways and Means Capital Construction Committee, asking them to recommit to the \$10 million funding allocated in 2013. Many more requests were made of the Committee than available funding/bonding authority will allow.

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Governance

Annual Session: Is Thirty Five Days Enough?

Even with three Legislative Day Periods (Interim committee planning meetings) following the 2013 session, and using the month of January to organize, members of this 2014 Oregon Assembly feel harried, overworked, and not ready to address major issues in 35 days (February 3-March 9) - and a leadership plan for adjournment February 28.



*Kappy Eaton,
Governance
Coordinator*

Adding to the fray, many legislators opted to introduce the allotted two bills, and committees, the allowed three, with more than 200 bills in the hopper. With exceptions for the Revenue, Rules and Ways and Means committees, all the Senate and House measures had to be heard or scheduled for work sessions in policy committees within the first six days of the session (winter storms have caused night hearings).

Enter [SJR 201](#), a constitutional amendment introduced by Senator Devlin. It calls for a referral to voters for legislation to reduce the odd-numbered year sessions from 160 to 150 days and to increase the even numbered year sessions from 35 to 45 days. It has been referred to the Senate Rules committee with no hearing yet scheduled. The League has not taken a position on this proposal.

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Fiscal Policy

March Economic Forecast: Steady, Stable, Low Growth

Since the July 8, 2013 close of the 2013 legislative session, Oregon personal tax income revenue has increased 1.6% (\$213.4 million), corporate tax revenue has decreased 4.8% (\$50.7 million), and the General Fund revenue is up 1.2% (\$192.8 million) from the Close of Session estimate. The state economist indicated that there are no 2015 kicker refunds implied by the forecast.

Across the board, the March economic forecast showed very modest increases in both personal income and personal income tax collections, but a 10.4% decline in corporate income tax collections. There was only a slight increase in

Oregon employment, up 4,340 jobs, from the December figures. Increased economic activity in terms of employment and investment have been increasingly positive in the Portland metro area, Bend, Medford, Hillsboro and Salem, but Eugene and the coastal and rural areas are still lagging. Availability of workforce, lagging home construction, and an aging population continue as risks to the economy.

The projected ending balance for the biennium is down \$64.1 million (21.35%). The Reserve Funds, Educational Stability and Rainy Day, are projected for \$176.9 and \$210.2 respectively at the 2015 Close of Session.

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Fiscal Policy

K-12 Public School Funding: Upbeat Projections



The annual report to the House and Senate Revenue committees regarding local revenues going into the Common School Fund for formula distribution was very positive, indicating total formula biennial revenues are up \$98 million over the prior estimate. This reflects a substantial increase in property taxes income and thus a higher Common School Fund distribution for 2014-15.

The total for distribution this biennium is now estimated to be \$3,322,017 billion, up from \$3,223,9 81 billion. The extension of federal forest fees also contributed. Across the state, the average daily membership allotment increased \$87.

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Revenue Issues

Several Balls Still in the Air

With possibly three weeks left in the session, the two Revenue committees are still considering some major proposals.

[HB 4005](#), -5 amendments replace the entire bill and have been adopted, but not yet moved from the committee. Under the measure, the number of electronic enterprise (E-Commerce) zones allowed in the state is increased from 10 to 13, certification is required from the Oregon Business Development Dept., the Manufacturing Business Energy Tax Credit is reinstated, the sunset is set at January 1, 2016, the tax credit for the business is capped at \$2 million, up from \$1 million, and lasts for five years. According to the Legislative Revenue Office, the

E-Commerce zone General Fund revenue impact is \$50,000 annually.

[HB 4148](#) returns the interest rate on deferred property taxes under the homestead tax deferral program to 6% per annum. It has passed to the House floor.

[HB 4039](#) exempts nonprofit corporations from ad valorem property taxation on low-income housing property. It was voted out of committee. However, there is a pending court case that could impact the legislative decision.

[HB 4097](#) creates a subtraction from taxable income for interest paid on student loans used to pay for attending an Oregon post-secondary institution. The bill has had a public hearing and a recommended change to ensure the student was an Oregonian.

[HB 4129](#) is a somewhat complicated proposal to increase cigarette and tobacco products taxes, add electronic cigarettes to the tobacco list, and require the additional money raised go to the Oregon Health Authority for distribution through the CCOs to tobacco prevention programs and mental health services. During the 2013 Special Session, cigarette taxes were raised by 13 cents, and continue increasing through 2017. No action has yet been taken after a public hearing.

[SB 1534](#) makes corrections to the provisions related to income subtractions for senior medical expenses, tax treatment of domestic international sales corporations, and distribution of proceeds from the cigarette tax. It is scheduled for a work session.

[SB 1528](#), relating to money sent to school districts for costs of educating students in eligible day treatment programs and eligible residential treatment programs, was sent by the Senate Finance and Revenue committee to Ways and Means after a spirited discussion about the reduction of funding proposed and the impact on students.

[HB 4113](#) addresses the controversial Columbia River Crossing project. In 2013, Oregon passed a funding measure of \$437 million as its share of the construction cost and the restriction that the Washington Legislature must agree to providing a like amount to continue the process. Washington has not agreed, and this bill repeals the restriction and would allow Oregon to pursue the construction with the use of available federal funds and certain agreements with Washington on the northern boundaries and project construction. After a heated public hearing, the House Transportation and Economic Development committee adopted amendments and referred the bill to Ways and Means.

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Election Issues

Election Proposals: Piled Up

Neither the Senate nor House Rules committees have yet held hearings on a group of proposals for changes to election statutes. Most do not have any significant revenue impact, but several do have important revisions to current laws. Since the Rules committees don't have the same deadlines as policy committees, time remains for consideration.



[SB 1544](#) relates to the Citizen Initiative Review (CIR) process. It would implement changes to the membership and meeting requirements of the CIR Commission to reduce from four to two the number of former panel moderators on the Commission, and increased from four to six the number of electors who have served on a review panel. The number of days for panel review would change to allow no less than three days nor more than the five days as now required, with a total of 24 hours. It would ensure that any statement from the CIR panels would be printed in the Voters' Pamphlet, and any Commission compensation would be established by rule. The League supports this legislation and [testified](#) February 19 in the Senate Rules committee.

[SB 4060](#) relates to strict proof of residency for first-time voter registrants, as well as to persons reregistering in Oregon. The Secretary of State also must design a study on how to ensure that all currently registered Oregon voters meet residency requirements. Acceptable evidence of residency is defined.

[SB 1504](#) is an omnibus Secretary of State elections "cleanup" bill. Among other laws, it would expand the list of violations that prohibit an individual from petition circulation, allow the name of a candidate nominated for a position in more than one district to appear more than once, change the timing and regulations pertaining to an unsigned ballot, and permits a person to show his/her marked ballot to another person.

[SB 1564](#) would require county elections officials to establish a defective ballot board to inspect ballots that tally systems have rejected, require county clerks to submit additional records on ballot security, require that clerks keep up to 5% of the total ballots mailed as replacement ballots, and require the Secretary of State to study and develop a system to ensure the security and integrity of ballots collected and delivered by third parties.

[SB 1515](#) would establish an Internet Voting work group to be convened by the Secretary of State and to report to the Legislature by December 1, 2014.

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Postsecondary Education

The House Higher Education and Workforce Development committee and the Senate Education and Workforce Development committee have heard numerous bills related to the Oregon public higher education system that now



includes both the seven universities and the 17 community colleges. Issues of cooperation and coordination, students, and funding are being considered.

[SB 1524A](#) has passed the Senate, is being considered in the House committee, and is expected to pass. It directs the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to examine the viability of a program to allow students who have graduated from an Oregon high school, or completed grade 12, to attend a community college for a specified period of time without paying tuition and fees.

[SB 1554](#) has been heard and relates to allowing certain counties to enact an education funding protection ordinance for up to 10 years. The county must be under 100,000 in population and subject to certain exemptions or special assessment programs under the ad valorem property tax statutes. This applies to counties with at least 50% of land is federally controlled.

[HB 4019](#) has been passed to Ways and Means after a positive hearing. It requires all higher education institutions to provide students, prior to enrollment, with a fact sheet regarding program requirements, costs of education, loans, average salary or wages, loan default rates and related data.

[HB 4084](#) was given a "do pass" vote and sent to Ways and Means. It directs the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development to administer a grant program for the purpose of distributing funds to community colleges to make child care services available to their students.

[HB 4147](#) which requires the Governor to appoint certain students to the HECC, was heard, but hasn't moved from the committee. It specifies the appointment of a voting student member from a community college, one from among the four regional institutions, and one from among the three major universities.

[HB 4018A](#) replaces the original bill and changes the date when any of the four regional institutions of higher

education can request having an institutional governing board to May 15, 2014 and gives the power to accept or refuse to the State Board of Higher Education. It also allows the HECC to enter into and administer interstate agreements for post-secondary distance education, moves the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development into the HECC as of July 1, 2015, and establishes a Task Force on Integrating the Department move.

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Social Policy

Education

Early Learning and Later Learning



Karen Nibler, Social Policy Coordinator

Ways and Means Education Subcommittee heard an update on the **Early Learning Council** regarding the progress of the hub applications. Only Marion County has an approved hub that is operational. Five more applications were approved, but final negotiations have not been completed. The agency has invited applications for 10 additional hubs, but essentially they will not be operational until 2015 or the next biennium. No changes were proposed in funding. The Subcommittee also reviewed the Department of Education Budget and its Strategic Initiatives. Additional funds may be considered at the end of the short session.

The **Youth Development Council** funds for the second year of the biennium had been held back in special appropriations pending administrative plans. The Governor and House Speaker have supported the new grant plans proposed by YDC staff. [HB 4134](#) was heard in the House Education Committee, but there were objections from the County Juvenile Departments to the plans for grants. The bill was sent to House Rules to resolve the issues. The League submitted testimony in 2013, which anticipated the conflict. The bill was heard in House Rules on February 19 and -8 amendments were adopted and bill was passed to the floor and Ways and Means Education Subcommittee. Funds have continued to go to Juvenile Departments this biennium, but are projected to change to grants in the next biennium.

Better Education for All

The Senate Education Committee passed bills on community college fee waivers, distance education, workforce training and dual credits for community college

classes. The House Education Committee passed bills regarding payment for school programs in correctional facilities and nursing facilities. Bills for summer meal programs and grants to high poverty schools passed, although Ways and Means will decide on funding levels for nursing facilities and summer meals.

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Human Services

Gambling addiction was the target of the House Human Services Committee in this short session. [HB 4040A](#) declared the Lottery has the obligation to serve the public good. [HB 4028A](#) diverted funds from Economic Development to Gambling Treatment but the bill will be vetted by the Ways and Means Human Services Subcommittee.

Housing bills [HB 4038A](#) required notification of residents if a manufactured home park was for sale, and [HB 4065](#) required notice if methamphetamine had been manufactured in a property for sale.

An interim **Elder Abuse Workgroup** resulted in [HB 4151](#), which codified the process for Elder Abuse Reports. Another bill, [HB 4124](#), requested that the Addictions and Mental Health agency hire a youth suicide prevention coordinator. Both of these bills were sent to Ways and Means due to budget demands.



[HB 4073](#) and [HB 4115](#) concerned the consumption of e-cigarettes or vapor products by minors, but the bills were not passed. The League submitted [testimony](#) in favor of [HB 4073](#). The Committee decided to appoint a workgroup to study the implications for public health impacts from vapor products for the broader population.

The Ways and Means Human Services Subcommittee accepted a report from the Oregon Health Authority on **Mental Health Investments** made in the 2013 Legislative Session. The League had submitted testimony on the community mental health needs in that session, and submitted a follow-up [letter](#) for the February 17 hearing on the AMH report.

The **Oregon Housing and Community Services Budget** was heard in The Ways and Means Transportation and Economic Development Committee on February 4. The second year funding for this biennium was held in a special appropriations fund for the Emergency Board. The head of this agency was directed to present plans for the restructuring of the agency and recommended that food

programs and volunteer programs, such as Court Appointed Special Advocates, be transferred out of the department. There were many policy boards that will be eliminated and a new overarching board will be appointed.

The Legislative Fiscal Office recommended that the second year funding be released along with expenditure limitations of Federal and Other Funds for housing and energy programs. The agency will continue in its present form through the biennium. Some federal housing programs will be phasing out.

The Housing Alliance has asked for \$1.5 million in investments in Emergency Housing and \$0.5 million for the State Homeless Assistance Program. The League is a member of the Housing Alliance. See [letter](#) from the Housing Alliance.

Funds for the safety-net programs are passed through to regional Community Action Agencies, which will continue. The Community Action Agencies have a representative in these hearings, and the local agencies have advocated for funds and programs to remain on the local level. The League submitted [comments](#) on the proposed budget plan, [HB 5015](#).

The budget action will appear in the end of session budget reconciliation bill. In the 2015-17 budget, the agency will be expected to reduce staff and to develop new Key Performance Measurements. Coordination with the Department of Human Services and Oregon Health Authority will also be expected to align OHCS with health and human service needs.

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Health Care

Health Care Reform Surges Onward



Both Senate and House Health Care Committees passed bills to assist the Affordable Care Act Implementation. [SB 1526A](#) requested a waiver to allow subsidies for children at 200-300% of the Federal Poverty Level. [SB 1582A](#) extended the Oregon Medical Insurance Pool to cover patients who have not found private coverage in the new system.

[HB 4050A](#) regulated small group insurance under 50 employees. [HB 4137](#) forgave student loans for primary care doctors, and [HB 4109](#) requested a Basic Health Study on

financing health care; both bills were referred to Ways and Means.

Additional health care bills allowed home care workers to join a union in [SB 1542A](#), provided guardianships for long term care residents in [SB 1553](#), and set regulations on chemicals in children's products in [SB 1569A](#). A pilot on repurposing durable medical equipment passed in [HB 4108A](#) and changes in licensing medical imaging in rural areas passed in [HB 4074](#).

[HB 4110A](#) relating to medical insurance payments for clients in custody went to House Rules where -12 amendments were adopted and the bill was passed to Ways and Means Human Services Subcommittee. However, the primary focus was on the technology problems in the Cover Oregon implementation. [HB 4154A](#), to allow tax credits for businesses, was approved after 9 amendments were rejected.

The **Legislative Audits Committee** heard an update from the **Cover Oregon** Chief Information Officers on February 14. They reported the system was operating with a hybrid electronic/manual process, and it had been used to sign up coverage for 35,247 people in private insurance and 67,517 in plans under Medicaid. 35,000 applications were requested but not submitted yet. The Oregon Health Authority has fast tracked 123,344 patients, who were formerly not eligible, into the Oregon Health Plan, for a total of 226,108 new enrollees.

Cover Oregon has overrun its cost projections and is currently withholding payment for the internet technology work pending implementation. Cover Oregon and Oracle staff are working at the same table to resolve the implementation issues. The website reopened for agents and agencies this week.

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Public Safety

Oregon Judicial Department

The Ways and Means Public Services Subcommittee heard from the Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) regarding the e court implementation on February 12. In comparison to other state internet technology projects, the e court implementation has stayed on schedule and within budget. The agency contract requires that systems be operational prior to payment.

Benton County Court has been the most recent to come online. Multnomah County is training staff for the largest online project. The schedule continues through 2015, and early 2016, to complete the statewide conversion. The

Chief Justice was empowered to set fees for the e court system.

Public Safety Punts Two Big Issues

The Senate Judiciary Committee took on big issues in this short session. [SB 1551A](#) required criminal history background checks on gun registration whenever ownership was transferred, but it was sent to Senate Rules without recommendation. [SB 1556A](#) on the legalization of marijuana was also sent to rules with a minority opinion. [SB 1531A](#) permitting local regulation of marijuana facilities did pass.

[SB 1550A](#) set time limits for speedy trials after negotiations between court officials and defense attorneys. [SB 1536](#) on access to adoption records in Juvenile Court files passed and [SB 1546A](#) for sellers of tobacco passed.

House Judiciary Hustles

The House Judiciary Committee heard and passed many bills in the first 10 days of the session. A study of the impact of the legalization of marijuana was approved in [HB 4099A](#), but was referred to Ways and Means to fund the study. [HB 4053A](#), supporting increased legal aid funding, passed February 5 and was sent to Ways and Means.



[HB 4114A](#) allowed the court to appoint special advocates for protected persons (elderly and disabled) who were in the court system with an assigned fiduciary agent.

Juvenile Justice

[HB 4037](#) allows juvenile offenders, sentenced in the adult system, to be transported by the Oregon Youth Authority or County Juvenile Departments staff in place of County Sheriff Officers. Last session a bill required these youth offenders go to juvenile rather than adult correctional facilities and this bill follows through with the transport by staff who work with juveniles. The League has supported the separation of juveniles from adults in facilities.

[HB 4094](#) provided a Minor in Possession exemption for minors who seek medical care for alcohol abuse. Incidents of alcohol poisoning bring minors to hospitals each year, but a few more die because no one calls 911. A study in another state said the exemptions resulted in 45% more calls for help. The bill passed February 10 with the hope that youth will ask for help for themselves or others under the influence.

Adult Corrections

[HB 4026A](#) required violation reports on the use of ignition interlock devices. [HB 4098A](#) grants credit for time served in jail prior to sentencing.

The Justice Reinvestment Project, an outcome of [HB 3194](#) in 2013, has disbursed funds to county corrections departments. The project managed by the Criminal Justice Commission is holding grant review meetings to follow up on the effectiveness of these programs. The main intent of the bill was to reduce prison population growth. The initial population numbers increased but they are trending down as reported to Public Safety Subcommittee. The League signed on to a letter sent to the 2014 Legislature supporting [HB 3194](#). See Oregon Coalition for Safety and Savings [letter](#).

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