



Legislative Report

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Legislature

You Helped Make This Happen

National Popular Vote Passes House: Half Way There!

By Kappy Eaton, Governance Coordinator

Great News! With the passage of National Popular Vote in the House, 38-21, on April 18, we are half-way to our goal of Oregon joining the Interstate Compact to ensure that every vote for President is equal across the 50 states. The vote was bi-partisan, reflecting the sponsorship of HB 3077 from both House and Senate members.

Our work is now cut out for us as we work to have the bill heard in Senate Rules, and moved to the floor and passed. **It is time to contact your Senator** and use talking points and information found on the National Popular Vote [website](#). There will be an Action Alert when the bill is in the Rules committee. Right now, we want to have a hearing scheduled.

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Social Policy

Early Learning and Youth Development Implementation

On the last day to pass bills, a 43-page amendment on [HB 2013A](#) was presented to the House Human Services Committee. Duke Shephard, the Governor's Advisor for Human Services, explained that this bill amends [HB 4165](#), which passed last session. The new amendment covers:



Karen Nibler, Social Policy Coordinator

- readiness for Kindergarten,
- quality improvement for home based child care,
- Healthy Families Oregon screening and home visitation for children 0-3,
- alignment with Coordinated Care Organization

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- metrics, and
- communication services for children with disabilities.

The amendment stipulated a process for Early Learning Hub proposals, identification of hubs no later than July 1, 2013 (instead of January 1, 2014), and funding for no more than seven hubs in the first year of the biennium and 16 hubs in the second year of the biennium. The Early Learning Council (ELC) shall oversee the delivery of services in communities not served by a regional hub. An Early Learning Kindergarten Readiness Account is established and an undetermined amount will be appropriated to support Early Learning Hubs. The amendment was adopted and the amended bill was sent to the floor with a do pass recommendation and a referral to Ways and Means. There were 4 no votes on the passage of the bill.

Legislators who were members of Commissions on Children and Families objected to the top down administration and a foreseeable gap or loss of funding for existing local services. Jada Rupley, ELC Director, reported that counties currently have 245 contracts for local services. The new focus will be on Kindergarten Readiness, with Relief Nurseries and Healthy Start programs funded. The Coalition of local Commissions lobbyist made 3 points:

- that services will go away in July,
- that the transition will continue services in hubs but not other areas of the state, and
- that staff will be needed on the local level.

Speaker Kotek said that the agency would report to the legislature by January 2014 on the location of the first seven hubs and the possible regions for the next nine approved hubs.

In contrast, the Youth Development Council (YDC), [HB 2392A](#) had -6 amendments submitted earlier. A workgroup had been meeting to resolve different expectations among involved parties and settled on this version. The amendment was adopted and the bill was moved to the House floor with a do pass recommendation and a referral to Ways and Means. The day before, [HB 3231](#), establishing YDC, was passed and sent to the House Rules Committee. This is still a work in progress.

The League submitted [testimony](#) on [HB 2013](#) and [testimony](#) on [HB 2392](#), with original concerns that have not been resolved.

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Early Learning and



Gun Safety Bills

coming up soon on the Senate floor.

Take Action Now

Call, write or email your [Senator](#)

Go to [Ceasefire Oregon](#) for information on the four bills and background information

The League's Action Team has been busier than bees.



Mid-way through the 2013 Legislative session Action has monitored hundreds of bills, delivered 65 testimonies, and sent out 5 Action Alerts.

You always get the latest "buzz" in the weekly *Legislative Report*.

The League's mission is in jeopardy.

The League of Women Voters has always had a commitment to register, educate and to turn out voters.

Youth Development Divisions Established



[HB 3234](#) brings the Early Learning Council into the Department of Education under an Early Learning Division. An amendment was approved on April 15 for the Relief Nurseries to receive direct payments from the state, rather than through the regional offices. Another amendment with technical fixes was approved on April 17 and the bill was passed out of the House Education Committee.

[HB 3231](#) brings the Youth Development Council into the Department of Education under a Youth Development Division, which is within the Oregon Education Investment Board. An amendment removed the Youth Conservation Corp from this Division. The amended bill was passed to the House floor, although this bill was referred to the House Rules Committee with no explanation. Both bills were referred to Ways and Means for budget decisions. The funding for both of these agencies has been unclear and has been a concern for local service agencies and area legislators.

Two other bills regarding the Oregon Education Investment Board were passed out of committee on April 17. [HB 3232](#) covers strategic investments for children 0-20 throughout the Early Learning, K-12 and the Career Readiness initiatives. [HB 3233](#) concerns evidence-based practices within the Teaching and Learning Network.

The League will continue to monitor the progress of these new state agencies and its initiatives under the Department of Education Budget.

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Mental Health Budget Scrutinized

On April 16, the Ways and Means Human Services Subcommittee reviewed the Mental Health Budget Policy Option Packages in [HB 5030](#). Those policy options included statewide roll out of the Early Assessment and Support program for youth ages 12-25 with a first psychotic diagnosis for \$1.8 million. OPAL-K has been developed to allow primary care practitioners to consult with the Oregon Psychiatric Access Line for Kids for \$1.5 million. Supported Housing for those with serious and persistent illness costs \$5.2 million for rent assistance and supportive services, including peer delivered support. Supportive employment for 14 counties will cost \$1.5 million. Intensive Treatment and Recovery Services for 750 parents with addictions will

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Alert!
**Keystone Pipeline
is
ALL Risk,
NO Reward**

The League opposes
the KXL Pipeline.
We need your help.

**Tell Secretary Kerry
to reject it!**
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Meet Action
Volunteer
Chris Vogel



"LWVOR is respected,
involved and influential
in the Oregon legislative
process. At 23, when I
first joined the League, I
was recruited by a
neighbor to edit the
state legislative
newsletter in WA. Then
career and children
became all absorbing.
Now, in retirement, I've
reconnected with LWV.

KAREN NIBLER
is very savvy in
SOCIAL POLICY issues,
and I'm fortunate to
apprentice with her.
Bills on Early Learning,

cost \$2.6 million, but it could avoid costs for state custody of the children.

The Medicaid expansion in 2014 is expected to cover 12,700 who are now uninsured. \$45 million in savings will be invested in community mental health and addictions services. The Ways and Means Committee will follow-up on the costs and savings as a result of the new Affordable Care Act.

The Addictions and Mental Health Division has not had an increase in residential provider rates in the past 6 years, and there were many complaints from providers during public testimony earlier. The division requested a 2.4% cola which was not in the Governor's Budget. The League submitted [testimony](#) earlier on this budget and is monitoring the budget process.

The Oregon State Hospital (OSH) will close the 24 geriatric beds and move patients to community settings. Along with savings in the pharmacy, OSH anticipates a \$3 million savings. The Blue Mountain and Portland Hospitals, with a capacity for 150 patients, will close for a savings of \$9.2 million. The Blue Mountain facility is old and the Portland Hospital has been leased. The Junction City Hospital is due to open in 2015 with a capacity for 125 patients.

OSH requires many health care staff to manage the behaviors of patients and often has times where overtime and/or temporary workers are needed. [HB 3131A](#) orders OSH to hire full time or part time relief staff to assist at times of temporary absences or heavy workload. The amended bill was passed, moved to the House floor and referred to Ways and Means. The Budget passed in the 2011 session cut staff positions and reduced open wards in the hospital.

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Youth Development, Human Services, and Corrections are on my radar."

Welcome to the Team Chris!

Support the Action Committee!



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It is your support that makes it possible to carry out this advocacy work at the Legislature

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Health and Human Services Bills Pass in the Last Week

In related bills, [SB 823A](#) requires the addition of new mental health programs and expansion of existing programs to meet the mental health needs of all Oregonians. The current community mental health system meets only 50% of the need. The bill develops:

- mobile crisis teams,
- crisis respite care,
- residential treatment and
- detox options to hospitalization.



An amendment sets up legislative oversight for six years. The U.S. Department of Justice is monitoring the adequate provision of Community Mental Health services, as well as the Oregon State Hospital Replacement Project. The bill was sent to the Senate floor with a do pass recommendation and referral to Ways and Means for funding.

A companion bill for mental health services for seniors, [SB 4](#), was also passed to the floor and to Ways and Means. These bills are consistent with the League's position to increase funding to Mental Health programs.

Tax credits for rural practitioners in [SB 325](#) was amended and moved to the Tax Credits Committee for further work on eligibility and income limits. [SB 365](#) on services for autism spectrum disorder was amended to replace the original bill and was sent to the Senate floor and to Ways and Means. [SB 436](#) on school based health clinics and the coordination with the Coordinated Care Organizations was amended on the last day and passed to the floor and Ways and Means. The League monitors these committees but did not testify on the amended bills. When amendments are presented to the committee on the last day, the public does not have sufficient notice and/or opportunity to comment at a Work Session.

[HB 2205A](#) extends an elder abuse workgroup for Seniors and People with Disabilities. The Department of Human Services reports annually on reported abuse of vulnerable persons, which is commonly substandard care. Ombudsman volunteers are important as 60% of the residents in residential facilities do not get visitors. The bill moved to the floor with a do pass. The League approves but did not testify earlier.

Section 8 Housing program mitigation for landlords passed in [HB 2639A](#). This bill sets up an Advisory Committee and a Mitigation fund for damages to rental property. The goal is to encourage landlords to accept the Section 8 vouchers

and provide more rental options to holders of the vouchers. The bill will move to the House floor with a do pass recommendation and a referral to Ways and Means. The League has supported housing options for low income residents but did not testify on this bill. The League is a member of the Housing Alliance, which does support low-cost housing.

[HB 3244A](#) allows the Runaway and Youth Programs to serve youth from 18 through 20 who are homeless. The Department of Human Services can provide transition housing for youth in their custody past their 18th birthday. This bill allows those youth not in state custody who are over 18 to be served in the federally funded programs. The federal law allows services for youth 18 through 20, so this bill brings the state into the same compliance. The bill passed out of House Human Services and will go to the House floor with a do pass recommendation. The League did a report on [Oregon's Homeless Youth](#) but did not testify on this bill.



A new pilot community home model in [HB 3445A](#) allows the Department of Human Services to place children in their custody in these alternative placements. Catholic Services in Salem will provide three community homes for a trial implementation. This bill was amended and passed to the House floor with a do pass and a referral to Ways and Means. The League will continue to monitor these Children at Risk pilots and report back to the Action Committee.

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Natural Resources

Department of Forestry Budget

[SB 5521](#) was heard this past week and the League [weighed in](#). There is a proposal that would change the formula for paying for fire suppression. The League commented in favor of positions that would address water quality. We also supported Stewardship Foresters who help landowners follow the Forest Practices Act, including enforcing the law as needed. Work done by the department has improved processes so that foresters are in the field more often and can process applications more efficiently.



Peggy Lynch, Natural Resources Coordinator

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Natural Resource Agency Budgets: Round 2

By Peggy Lynch, Natural Resources Coordinator

In the next few weeks, the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources will be reviewing the Policy Option Packages (new programs agencies are asking for their budgets) and possible reductions in their budgets.



[SB 5521](#), Dept. of Forestry, [SB 5547](#), Water Resources Dept., [HB 5013](#), Oregon Fish and Wildlife Dept., and [SB 5520](#), Dept. of Environmental Quality are up this week of April 22. This committee will also begin to consider policy bills that were sent to their committee to determine if they can be funded under various agency budgets. Some bills were planned by the agencies at the beginning of session, but others come from legislators and will need to be considered during budget negotiations.

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Dead, Alive, On Life Support

By Peggy Lynch, Natural Resources Coordinator

As of 5 p.m. on April 18, most policy bills' lives were determined: a bill is dead if it had not moved out of the policy committee in the chamber in which it was first introduced, acted upon, or sent to Rules, Revenue or Ways and Means. Many were amended so you will see an "A" after the bill number. You can find the amendments adopted and/or the new bill on the [legislative website](#). Below is a status report of Natural Resources bills we've been following by category. Click on the category to see the bill list in detail.

- [Land Use](#)
- [Water](#)
- [Forestry](#)
- [Regional Solutions](#)
- [Parks](#)

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Governance

Super Majority Proposed for All Laws

[HJR 27](#) was heard in House Rules April 15. The proposal for

an amendment to the Oregon Constitution would require that all laws and constitutional amendments would need a two-thirds approval vote in each chamber to pass. Currently, any measure to raise revenue must have a three-fifths approval vote, but a simple majority is the norm.



Kappy Eaton,
Governance
Coordinator

The League testified in opposition citing our position regarding the Constitution as the basic framework of government which should not be filled with non-essential material. We also observed that a super majority requirement goes against basic democracy as well as not enhancing or improving the ability of the Legislature to function adequately. It actually might hinder progress.

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Considering Tax Reform: Finally?

The Governor was invited to the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee on April 15 to discuss Comprehensive Tax Reform. That phrase has not been heard aloud in the Capitol for quite some time, although the need for it is quietly discussed all the time.



The bill is [SJR 36](#), which proposes a constitutional amendment for a 5% sales tax on tangible personal property and services as well as a 5% use tax on the purchase of services. Specifically exempted are sales of water, food, clothing, drugs, medical and mobility equipment and utilities, as they are defined in law. [SB 824](#) is the accompanying statute, which enacts uniform sales and use tax administration.

Some of the reasons for wanting to look at tax reform given by the Governor and the sponsors of the bill included:

- 25 years of mixed fiscal policy,
- the need for a trained workforce,
- the kicker laws,
- the dependence on the volatile personal and corporate income taxes, and
- the funding crisis in local governments.

There was additional discussion on April 17 to accommodate those who were not able to be heard earlier. It appeared that most of the stakeholders were present. There was general agreement about using [SJR 36](#) as the start of a serious interim review of the Oregon tax system,

with a goal of recommendations for the next legislative session. We will be monitoring that effort.

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Elections Update

There has not been movement on [HB 2198](#), the Secretary of State's universal voter registration bill. Questions have arisen about security, the expense of the prepaid card, the people who really don't want to vote not responding, and adding to the ballots being sent out to lots of non-voters and the impact on local election offices if thousands are added to the registered list.

However, the goal is to have greater citizen participation in government issues and elections, so the concept is appropriate and important to League principles. The Secretary of State is considering amendments, which have not yet come forth.

Security for unused ballots, [HB 2199](#), will be up on the House floor next week, as well as [HB 3175A](#), which directs public universities and community colleges to increase voter registration access and information. One of the reasons the Rules committee only passed it out on a 5-3 vote is because all classes on campuses must devote 10 minutes to voter issues, which could become burdensome.

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Tax Expenditures Update

The senior medical deduction bills still have not been scheduled for a hearing.



[HB 2456A](#), which eliminates the Oregon itemized deductions for some high income level Oregonians and increases the corporate minimum income tax on Oregon companies with more than \$100 million in Oregon sales, passed out of the House Revenue committee April 16 on a party-line vote. Charitable contributions are exempted. The revenue from this bill covers the \$275 million gap in the Ways and Means co-chairs' budget.

[SB 822A](#), the PERS reform bill, has passed the Senate and is expected to be reviewed in the House Revenue committee within two weeks. This is the bill that gains \$455 million from lowering the cost-of-living benefits awarded annually to public employee retirees and eliminates higher payments to cover state taxes for PERS recipients who pay no Oregon taxes.

It is expected that all of the revenue raising bills might be considered together after the May revenue forecast and the final budget is being put together.

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