



Legislative Report

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Now or Never for Gun Safety Bills

Gun Safety Bills are still alive and are hanging on by a mere thread.

Oregon legislators need to hear from us this week! [Four gun safety bills](#) were moved to the Rules Committee. This legislative maneuver will keep the bills alive, giving senators the time to negotiate and win over the votes needed to pass this legislation out of the Oregon Senate. **We must have a vote in the Senate soon!**

Nationally, there has been a major backlash against the U.S. Senate for failing to act on sensible gun laws. **Don't stand for politicians avoiding this issue or refusing to act** in the face of the tragedies at Newtown and Clackamas Town Center.

Tell your legislator we deserve a vote!

We can enact important, common-sense legislation to reduce gun violence in Oregon this session.

We need you to make this happen.

FOUR SIMPLE WAYS TO TAKE ACTION

1. Contact your [legislator](#) AGAIN. The message to convey, **"You must take action to reduce gun violence this session."** It is important to focus most strongly on [SB 700A](#) (Universal Background Checks) and [SB 347A](#) (Allows school districts to limit guns in K-12 schools).
2. Post on your social media, including Facebook and Twitter, that **you want legislative action taken to reduce gun violence in Oregon this session.**
3. Sign this [petition](#) and forward the message to your family and friends.
4. Write a Letter to the Editor. These are critical in shaping legislators' opinions. The more letters they receive from us the more chance a letter with our viewpoint will get published. Here is a helpful [sample letter](#). (link to letter) Find your local community newspapers [here](#).

We can do it. Thank you for taking action!

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Governance

County Revenue Crisis: Solutions Discussion 1



*Kappy Eaton,
Governance
Coordinator*

The Senate Finance and Revenue Committee opened the proverbial "can of worms" with its hearing of [HB 2870A](#) on April 29. Already passed by the House, the bill would allow counties to tax cigarettes and other tobacco products at a rate no larger than that charged by the state. At least 40 percent of the tax revenues must be expended on public health programs and services, for tobacco use prevention and cessation; and mental health and addiction programs and services. A county may contract with the Department of Revenue to provide collection, enforcement, administration and distribution services as provided by law. Several Oregon counties are in financial peril and need additional revenue.

Supporters, including county commissioners, social service and health providers, unions, the Tobacco Free Coalition, the American Heart Association, businesses, the Association of Oregon Counties, youth groups and former smoking individuals, pointed to the need for new revenue tools for the counties and the significant health benefits from lowered numbers smoking because of higher costs to teenagers and low income persons, saving public money. Their information was backed up by studies, charts, reports, and statistics from Washington state, which raised its tobacco tax considerably last year.

Opposition arguments were presented by tobacco company representatives, the Tax Payers Association of Oregon, Plaid Pantry, Association of Oregon Industries, and Oregon Neighborhood Stores, among others. They pointed out the loss of jobs that would be created from loss of tobacco sales, the poor way the state has handled the billions of dollars received in tobacco settlement funds, the severe impact on low income Oregonians, and the meager amount that counties would actually end up with, given the costs of administration and collection.



The hearing room was full, the statements passionate and the tobacco lobbyists confident. The outcome is uncertain.

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County Revenue Crisis: Solutions Discussion 2



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National Popular Vote

Needs your help

HB 3077 is sitting in the [Senate Committee on Rules](#)

Contact the committee [members](#)
Tell them you want a hearing.

Tell them you want the bill passed.

Tell them more than 70% of Oregonians favor NPV.

Tell them you want **your vote to count.**

Oregon Legislature has less than **four weeks** to move most bills.

Deadline May 31

Here is a bill progress report as of April 26.

The Senate has passed 220 of 969 measures introduced and has acted on 43 of the 333 House-passed bills.

The House has passed 333 of 1,662 measures introduced and has acted on 23 of the 220 Senate-passed bills.

The Governor has signed

About the same time, the House Task Force on Oregon and California (O&C) Counties was discussing two bills relating to fiscally challenged counties and their inability to declare bankruptcy in Oregon. If a county is unable to provide certain services required by state law, [HB 2206](#) sets up the system to cover those programs, which are elections, taxation and assessment, building codes, veterans services, and some intergovernmental relations. The targeted counties include Curry, Josephine, Lane and Douglas, with Malheur and Lake also mentioned. Under the legislation, the Secretary of State could assume the county clerk's election duties and assess and collect property taxes. The proposal clause also includes veteran's services and building codes. There would be an emergency back-up plan triggered if the Governor declares, at a county's request, a fiscal emergency.

Testifying in support were the Elections Division, the Department of Consumer & Business Services Building Codes division, the Veterans Administration (VA) Department and Lane County's Intergovernmental Relations Coordinator. Various sources of funding were identified, including the E-Board.

[HB 3453](#) gives the Governor authority to declare a county in

a public safety fiscal emergency if the House Speaker, the Senate President, and the Minority leaders in each Chamber all agree. The affected county also must consent. The Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) is neutral on this proposal, while the League of Oregon Cities (LOC) supports it. AOC is working hard to get federal continuation of the O&C funding, the loss of which is the primary cause of the financial problems in the affected Oregon counties. The LOC testified to the enormous cuts in city public safety programs that are impacting mental health, sheriff patrols and law enforcement services, which are putting the public at risk.

The legislators on the Task Force were sympathetic, concerned, and not reassuring as to any state assistance.

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Ballot Barriers: Language Solutions?

[HB 3506](#) was heard May 1 in the House Committee on Rules. The bill, sponsored by a legislator, would require that the Secretary of State and the county election clerks provide voting materials in languages other than English to minority language speakers in counties in which either five percent of the population or 10,000 citizens, over the age of five, are members of a single language



48 bills.

[Read Statesman
Journal article](#)

Save this Date
May 22
and
Plan to Come to
**Oregon Climate
Action Day**
11am - 4pm
at the
Oregon State Capitol

The Salmon



will be there!

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Gun Safety Bills

Waiting for the bills
to come up on the
Senate floor?
Don't wait
Take Action Now

**[Sign this
Petition](#)**
in support of
common-sense
gun reform in Oregon

**Call, write or
email**
your
[Senator](#)
They need to hear
from you NOW!

minority community.

In discussing both the desire to engage more minority citizens in the elections process and the difficulty with the costs of providing ballots, Voters' Pamphlets, voting instructions, and registration information in several languages, the Secretary of State suggested the possibility of a Task Force or a work group of stake holders to provide the means to the end of involving more Oregonians in government. Such issues as security in translations, integrity, access and ensuring across-the-state participation were brought up.

Both the Bus Project and the Oregon Student's Association spoke in support. Amendments are underway to address the issues and to establish a Task Force.

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Governance Bills Changing or Moving

[SB 306](#) was not taken over by a carbon tax study proposal (see [Legislative Report #13](#)), and is back to being discussed as a statutory means of putting the corporate kicker refund into the General Fund for public education to match the voter's approval of a constitutional amendment in 2012.

Two election proposals were sent to the Senate floor by the Senate Committee on Rules May 1.

- [SB 147](#) adjusts deadlines on candidate filing statements for the Voters' Pamphlet.
- [SB 154](#) requires that the entity or organization that pays persons to obtain signatures on election petitions must register with the Secretary of State.

[SB 307](#), which requires that all interest on moneys in the General Fund be deposited into the Rainy Day Fund on a regular basis, passed out of the Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue and was sent to the Senate floor.

[HB 2198](#), the Election Modernization bill, reappeared as [HB 3521](#) on May 8 in the House Committee on Rules. The League [supported](#) the original bill, and new action will be reported in LR 15.

[SB 270A](#), the University Boards proposal, has passed out of the Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee to Ways and Means. It underwent several amendments and is now 110 pages long.

The House Revenue Committee sent [HB 2490](#), the surviving proposal of the four Senior Medical Deduction bills, to the Joint Tax Credits Committee. This is the group that is reviewing all of the sun setting and other tax

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on the **bills**

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
Marge Easley



"As a former state action chair and president, I suppose it's inevitable that I get re-energized each legislative session to advocate on behalf of the League. There are always issues that pique my interest, and before I know it I'm hooked once more to research bills, write testimony, and be surrounded by a wonderful cadre of activists. I remain in awe at the dedication and knowledge base of our new and long-term volunteers."

expenditure bills considered by the policy committees. [HB 2490](#) calls for certain dollar amounts of senior medical expenses to be subtracted from income tax returns of persons 62 and older, based on levels of income. The bill has blanks for the committee to fill in before it goes to Ways and Means.

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Social Policy

Human Services and Health Authority Get an Infusion



Karen Nibler, Social Policy Coordinator

The Ways and Means Human Services Subcommittee reviews the expenditures of the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) during the biennium. In December, the E-Board added \$5 million to the DHS Budget, pending caseload and budget reports.

Those reports, on May 1st, included a higher caseload in assistance to families and higher medical service claims. In [HB 5549](#), the budget committee added \$1.469 million in General Funds for DHS and \$237,309 for OHA to cover increased costs for services to recipients for the remainder of the biennium.

The slow economic recovery is recognized as the driver in the sustained demand for assistance to families and medical care for children and disabled adults. The numbers have decreased slightly, partly because a part time job can disqualify a recipient for the financial assistance or food benefits. The labor market has been a little better, but seasonal jobs can cause an impact for exit and reapplication for these benefits. Eligible children and disabled adults have added costs for health care.

The agencies presented a spring forecast for the 2013-2015 biennium, which predicted a decrease in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance, but a continued need for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families and Employment Related Day Care. In Child Welfare, foster care placement is decreasing and guardianship with relatives and friends is increasing due to policy changes. The data system is changing, so protective services data is not comparable.

In Aging and Physical Disabilities, long-term care in the home is expected to increase, as nursing home and community based facilities populations decrease slightly. Due to demographics, more low income seniors may qualify for services. Developmental Disabilities Services and

**Thank you, Marge,
for being a member
of the
Action Team!**

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Vocational Rehabilitation clients are expected to be down slightly. The participation rate in job services has increased.

The Medicaid population has increased by 65%, reflecting the policy decision to cover families for one year after leaving the TANF program, and increased coverage for children above the poverty level. More adults are applying for disability status as a means to get health benefits. The Affordable Care Act will bring in a higher number of low income adults in January 2014, but the agency finds it difficult to predict the numbers of new applicants. Fortunately federal funds will support this expansion.

The Addictions and Mental Health (AMH) Division forecast does not predict a significant need, although the AMH director stated there is a need for community beds for patients leaving the State Hospital to free up the more expensive level of care at the hospital. The expanded federal health benefit could create the need for more community services. [HB 2594A](#) has the potential to increase civil commitments. The League is monitoring the Ways and Means Budget process and [testified](#) on the AMH budget.

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Bill of Rights for Foster Children



The Senate Health Care and Human Services Committee listened to foster children talk about experiences within the system and the need for notification of rights for children within the child welfare system. The rights include:

- the ability to make complaints about care, placement or services,
- to be notified of hearings and reviews,
- to have transportation provided, and
- to have contact information for individuals regarding these rights.

Once a foster child is 14 or older, he or she must be provided with written information on independent living skills, available services and transition plans. [SB 123A](#) was approved on April 18th, the last day to pass the Senate Committee, and was sent to Ways and Means. This bill fits with our [Children at Risk position](#), so the progress of the bill will be monitored.

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College Tuition and Fees Waived

[HB 2095A](#) defines foster child as eligible for the waiver of tuition and fees at an institution of higher education, if the student was not dismissed from the Department of Human Services care or tribal care before age 16 and enrolls within three years after leaving custody or completing high school or the equivalent. The House Education Committee passed this bill early in March and the Senate Education Committee passed the bill April 30th.

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Mental Health Services

[SB 491](#) allows a minor 14 or older to seek outpatient treatment without parental knowledge or consent. The youth may contact a physician, psychologist, nurse practitioner, clinical social worker, professional counselor or marriage and family therapist, or a community mental health program. The professional providing treatment shall involve the parents, unless the minor is emancipated or has been sexually abused by a parent. The professional shall contact parents if the minor's condition has deteriorated or is at risk for a suicide attempt or the minor is in need of inpatient treatment or detox in a residential facility. This bill expands the professionals who are exempt from civil liability.



This bill was passed by the House Chamber on March 13 and was scheduled in the House Health Care Committee on May 6th. House committee members had some reservations and carried the bill over to Wednesday, May 8th.

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Caretaker Relatives Rights

[SB 601](#) gives a relative caretaker the authority to consent to medical treatment and educational services for a minor child, if the legal parent or guardian cannot. An affidavit shall be submitted to a health care provider or school, which shall expire after one year. The health care provider or school may ask for documentation of the caregiver's status. The relative is liable for payment for services. The Health Care provider or school is not civilly or criminally liable for the provision of services.

This bill passed the Senate Chamber on April 1st and was scheduled in the House Human Services Committee on May 6th. The House committee



amended the bill so that the caretakers were not liable and passed the amended bill to the House floor for a vote. If it passes, the bill will be a win for relative caregivers!!!



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Grandparent Rights

[HB 3249A](#) requires the Department of Human Services to make diligent efforts to identify and contact the grandparents of a child in custody. The Department will notify the grandparent of a hearing and give the grandparent the opportunity to speak at the hearing. The grandparent may request visitation or communication with the child. The bill was passed by House Judiciary and sent to Ways and Means, where it was heard on April 30th.

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Family Assistance and Food Benefits

[HB 3322](#) requires that electronic benefits transfer cards, such as Oregon Trail cards for food purchases, cannot be used to purchase prepaid credit cards. Legislators brought this bill forward so that these cards could not be converted to credit cards, when they could be used for any purchase. The bill passed in March 25th in House Human Services and sits in Ways and Means.



[HB 3440A](#) proposes temporary assistance for a family with a temporary eligibility due to unemployment or homelessness. The bill passed April 10th and also sits in Ways and Means waiting for budget decisions.

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Natural Resources

Natural Resource Agency Budgets: Round 2 Week 3

The Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources will be reviewing the Policy Option Packages (POPs-new programs agencies are asking for their budgets) and possible reductions in the budget of the Department of Fish and Wildlife ([HB 5013](#)) on May 6th. This completes the second review of natural



Peggy Lynch, Natural Resources Coordinator

resource agency budgets.

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Natural Resource Agency Budgets - Moving

On Tuesday, May 7th, the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources began making decisions (holding Work Sessions) on three budget bills:

- Marine Board ([HB 5025](#)),
- Land Use Board of Appeals ([SB 5531](#)) and
- the Department of Geology and Mineral Industries ([HB 5014](#)).



Once approved by the subcommittee, they are forwarded to the Full Ways and Means Committee for consideration and then to the floor of the two chambers for a final approval. If the bill starts with "HB", it will go to the House first; if "SB", it will first go to the Senate. Final action will be the Governor's signature.

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Policy Bills Considered in Ways and Means

The Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources is also beginning to consider policy bills that have a fiscal impact. Currently there are 25-30 policy bills assigned to this subcommittee after having been heard and passed out of a policy committee. Since each Ways and Means Subcommittee has been given their own total "budget," the [members](#) will need to balance the cost of these bills with the other budget requests by the agencies.

These bills may be amended by this committee, although amendments are to relate to budget impact rather than making new policy. However, they do sometimes dip their toes into policy issues. It's important to continue to monitor bills in case amendments change the original intent of the bill. For the League, changes may support our positions or not. We may wish some bills not be funded this session, but others we are asking to pass. The following three bills will be considered the week of May 6th:

- [HB 2050A](#), relating to forestland fire protection, has a General Fund impact of \$3.6 million ([fiscal](#)). The Oregon Department of Forestry protects approximately 16 million acres (24,900 square miles) of private and public forestland from fire. Protected lands are primarily private,



but also include state and other non-federal public land and, by contract, United States Bureau of Land Management forests in western Oregon. This is more than half of the total forest land in Oregon. Private landowners pay part of this cost; this bill increases the public cost.

- [HB 2039A](#), relating to outfitting and guiding services, creates a new fee for the Marine Board in regulating these services.
- [HB 2248](#), relating to mineral resources, amends certain statutes that deal with different kinds of mining. New fees may be required.

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