

# Social Policy

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By Marge Easley, Bill Walsh, Nancy Donovan, Karen Nibler and Debbie Aiona, Social Policy Portfolio

## Health Care (Bill Walsh)

Great news! The HOPE Amendment, [SJR 12](#), passed the Senate and House and now awaits the Governor's signature. SJR 12 is one of the shortest bills to pass this session:

### PARAGRAPH 1.

The Constitution of the State of Oregon is amended by creating a new section 47 to be added to and made a part of Article I, such section to read:

### SECTION 47.

(1) It is the obligation of the state to ensure that every resident of Oregon has access to cost-effective, clinically appropriate and affordable health care as a fundamental right.

(2) The obligation of the state described in subsection (1) of this section must be balanced against the public interest in funding public schools and other essential public services, and any remedy arising from an action brought against the state to enforce the provisions of this section may not interfere with the balance described in this subsection.

## PARAGRAPH 2.

The amendment proposed by this resolution shall be submitted to the people for their approval or rejection at the next regular general election held throughout this state.

Representative Andrea Salinas, one of 25 co-sponsors, noted: “We need to send this to the voters because of the unpredictability of the future of health care at the federal level. The marketplace needs some stability, the state of Oregon needs a path forward. We don’t need better insurance instruments, we need better access to health care.”

The proposed amendment to the Oregon Constitution, if passed by the voters in 2022, will declare health care to be a human right. It will require the state to balance affordable care with other “essential public services,” including public schools. It will require lawmakers and policy makers to craft policies that would put some sort of universal health care coverage in place. And that is happening. Enter the Joint Task Force on Universal Health Care – their charge is to design and put forward a financing plan to achieve universal health care for all residents and their work is progressing.

HOPE stands for Healthcare Opportunities Provided Efficiently. There is evidence to show that the dollars spent for health care in this state (and nation) are sufficient to cover all residents. The COVID-19 pandemic illustrates anew what has already been clear--that coverage is not happening. The funds must be redirected. The League has supported universal health care for decades. The LWVOR has watched previous iterations of the HOPE Amendment over a number of years and withheld support. We have urged language like that added this year in subsection 2. The Rogue Valley LWV Board is on record supporting SJR 12, as is the LWVOR Action Committee. That support is based on LWVUS positions, so to be certain we were on the right track, LWVOR President Becky Gladstone consulted with the National League on the bill’s compliance and they concurred. Now that the bill has passed, LWVOR and LWVRV are positioned to partner with allies on a public education campaign on

the upcoming ballot measure much like we did here in support of Ballot Measure 101.

## Housing (Debbie Aiona and Nancy Donovan)

[HB 2007 A](#): The Joint W&Ms Committee held a work session on HB 2007 A. It would reinstate the Task Force to Address Racial Disparities in Homeownership created by the Legislature in 2018. The task force was charged with compiling data, identifying barriers, investigating mortgage practices, and recommending solutions. They issued their final [report](#) in December 2019. The data they gathered show that Black Oregonians have a homeownership rate of 32.2 percent, for whites it is 65.1 percent. Other communities of color experience lower homeownership rates than whites. The task force report includes recommended preliminary solutions and proposals for further work. If the task force is reinstated it can continue with its work.

HB 2007 A would also add a requirement for implicit bias training for a home mortgage loan originator license.

[HB 2008 B](#): The Senate Finance and Revenue Committee held a public hearing on HB 2008. It would provide a property tax exemption for property owned by religious organizations if it is used to provide affordable housing to low-income households. The housing must remain affordable for at least 60 years. This legislation also expands the zoning where the housing is allowed within the urban growth boundary and adds flexibility.

Regional Housing Needs Analysis: In 2019 the Legislature passed [HB 2003](#). It requires regions within the state to project population growth and housing needs, and then inventory buildable lands and accommodate needed housing. The next steps will require development of a Housing Production Strategy. A key component of the HPS will be demonstrating that the strategies result in fair and equitable outcomes. The House Committee on Housing held an [informational hearing](#) on the

RHNA on June 1. The [slide presentation](#) includes information on the process and on Oregon's housing need and supply.

[HB 2456](#): On Monday, (6/7) the House Revenue Committee held a work session on HB 2456, an omnibus bill that makes several technical changes to affordable housing property tax exemptions. The bill will allow for low-income rental property, incomes at or below 80% (up from 60%) area median income (AMI) after the first year a person occupies the property. Also, if a property received a federal low-income housing tax credit, the income requirement would be at or below 80% of area median income. Tenants with incomes up to 80 percent of AMI would be eligible to rent units in the building if the overall average AMI among tenants was no more than 60 percent. This policy would open the door for tenants with lower incomes to live in these properties.

For nonprofit owned low-income rental housing, if a property was awarded a federal low-income housing tax credit, the income requirement would be at or below 80% AMI as long as the overall average is at or below 60%.

For single-unit housing, the bill will allow a city to extend the deadline for completion of construction for 24 months. The exception will give developers more time to complete the construction of affordable homes.

[HB 2004 A](#) appropriates \$9,700,000 from the General Fund to the Housing and Community Services Department Revolving Account for low-barrier emergency shelters and to the Oregon Department of Administrative Services (Oregon DAS) for navigation centers. Oregon DAS will award funds to the Oregon Community Foundation to support emergency shelters through grants to local community organizations for the acquisition, retrofitting and operation of emergency shelters throughout this state. The Joint Committee on W&Ms held a work session on 6/4.

[HB 3127](#) is the Wildfire Recovery Funding Package. The Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery will hold an

informational hearing on Thursday, 6/10.

The funding breakdown for housing is:

Housing and Community Services Department:

- \$300 million in lottery bonds for housing rehab, reconstruction, and replacement of homes, mobile homes, manufactured housing units; temporary rental/ relocation assistance.
- \$50 million in lottery bonds for and acquisition for affordable and/or other housing units.
- \$50 million from the General Fund for affordable housing subsidies for mobile home parks, modular, single-family, rentals, and "Oregon Rebuilding Oregon" housing initiative.
- \$7.5 million from the General Fund for wildfire rebuild, bulk purchasing lumber revolving loan program.
- \$1.5 million from the General Fund for the Marion County Housing Authority Santiam Canyon Housing Project.
- \$500,000 from the General Fund for Lane County for temporary housing pads and the utility connection incentive program.

And other state agencies will receive:

- \$90 million from the General Fund to the Oregon Department of Human Services for feeding and sheltering of wildfire survivors.
- \$10 million from the general Fund to the Department of Consumer and Business Services for residential/commercial fire hardening grants for rebuilds.
- \$10 million from the General Fund to the Oregon Department of Energy for residential/commercial energy efficiency grants for rebuilds.

## Justice Issues (Karen Nibler)

The Senate Human Services and Senate Rules Committees proposed in [SB 4 A](#) that a System of Care Advisory Council be appointed to direct and implement in-home behavioral health services for families. An Executive Director would be hired and an Intergovernmental Agreement made with the Oregon Health Authority.

[SB 1](#) in 2019 proposed a system of care for children including health, public health, human services and the juvenile system with coordination among agencies. SB 4 A appoints an Advisory Council with staff to assist agencies in policy development and implementation of in-home behavioral health services in crises and transitions, including relative, foster care and residential programs. The Council may make recommendations to agencies to reduce barriers and strengthen the systems of care for children. A public hearing was held on 6-3 and a work session is scheduled on 6-8.

The House Rules Committee considered [HB 3395](#) on paid family and medical leave on June 1. The bill delayed implementation until 9-1-22 with contributions on 1-1-23 and operations on 8-3-23. The Employment Department will review the plans and adequacy of application fees on 1-1-24.

The Human Services W&Ms Subcommittee held a Budget Rebalance on the Department of Human Services and Oregon Health Authority in [HB 5043](#) on May 27. They also considered the Long Term Care Ombudsman Budget and Public Guardian Program in [HB 5019](#) which had doubled in staff and utilizes volunteer visitors to the elderly. This program had strong legislative support.

The Department of Human Services administrators reported considerable savings in Child Welfare due to reduced residential program costs and in Self-Sufficiency programs due to fewer applicants from two-parent families. There were savings in Adult and People with Disabilities Programs due to federal funds for Covid tests, but Intellectual Disabilities had cost increases for in-home and nursing services. New technology for the One Eligibility System costs were considerable. Wildfire emergency funds were obviously unanticipated but supplied by the E-Board.

The Oregon Health Authority had a caseload increase due to the Covid and wildfire emergency. Parent/relative cases were higher and expected to remain higher through 2023, the predicted end of the public health

emergency. Cover All Kids applicants were not as high as expected but there has been an increase of Oregon Health Plan enrollment overall. Mental Health and Behavioral Health expansion is anticipated. The Oregon State Hospital costs have been higher due to overtime and quarantine situations. Covid infected staff are requiring replacements. The Emergency Board will be reviewing the costs throughout the Interim.

## Immigration, Refugee, other Rights/Basic Needs (Claudia Keith)

Active Priority Bills - League testimony submitted:

[SB 778 A](#) Establishes the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Advancement to implement and oversee statewide immigrant and refugee integration strategy. Directs the Governor to appoint a director of office. [Fiscal \\$1.4M](#), for 2021-23 Biennium, currently in JW&Ms. [League Testimony](#)

[SB 718](#) Appropriates money from the General Fund to the Department of Human Services to award grants to refugee resettlement agencies to provide specified services to refugees. Work [Session 4/8](#). Passed out of committee 4-1. Fiscal \$4.3M, (requires \$600k for employment services). In Joint W&M. [League Testimony](#)

[SB 778 and SB 718 are supported by the Communities of Color Coalition.](#)

[HB 3230 A](#) Universal (Legal) Representation for persons in immigration matters. A number of [coalitions](#) support. ([General Fund \\$15M](#), Includes Oregon DoJ funding), [League Testimony](#). In 2019 Innovation Law Lab: Press Release: 'Statewide expansion of Oregon's Universal [Representation Immigrants Begin](#)'. [Supported by Fair Shot Oregon](#), In Joint W&Ms.

Bills being followed - No League Testimony Planned

Active in Full Joint Ways & Means or JWM sub-committee

New [HB2167 A](#) Fiscal: \$.51M (1.5FTE) 2021-2023 and \$.63M (2.0 FTE) 2023-2025. Creates Racial Justice Council within the Office of Governor. Directs council to report at least once per year on strategies designed to institutionalize racial justice into conduct of state business. Directs council to provide advice and recommendations to the Governor relating to racial justice. Directs council to advise and assist state agencies in creating racial impact statements for programs in agency request budgets. 6/3 JWM sub cmt Gen Gov work session Heard and Reported Out returned to Full JWM.

New [HB2002 A](#) Transforming Justice. [Fiscal \\$26M](#), Referred to JWM. Directs Oregon Criminal Justice Commission to establish a program to award grants for restorative justice programs. Directs commission to report to interim committees of Legislative Assembly related to judiciary concerning awarding of grants. Appropriates moneys to commission for purposes of the program.

[HB 3353 A](#): 6/3 assigned to JWM HS sub committee. Likely a green Light. Requires Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to request approval from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to allow coordinated care organizations (CCOs) to spend 3% of their global budgets to address the needs of local communities to improve equity. (\$360k)

[SB 70](#), Oregon Health Authority: Defines "regional health equity coalition" and "regional health equity coalition model." Requires Oregon Health Authority to work with regional health equity coalitions and groups using regional health equity coalition models throughout the state. Fiscal [\\$2M](#). [Supported by OHEA](#). Assigned to Joint WM HS sub cmt on 6/3, likely a green light.

[HB 3265 A](#) The Sanctuary Promise Act. [Work Session](#) was 4/13. (7-3) now in Joint W&M. [Fiscal 3.5 FTE](#), \$905k (2021-23 Biennium) [Supported by a number of coalitions including](#) the Rural Organizing Project [and FairShotForALL](#). Read [LWVOR and LWVUS 2020 immigration](#) resolution.

Active in Rules, Revenue or waiting for Disposition

[HB 2337](#) Requires state agencies and third-party contractors that collect demographic data on behalf of state agencies to comply with rules adopted by Oregon Health Authority for collection of data on race, ethnicity, preferred spoken and written languages and disability status. Work Session was 5/25, passed (5,0,2,0) due pass w amendments, to W&M. 6/4 House Speakers Desk - Awaiting Disposition

[HB 3110 A](#) Requires the board of directors of publicly traded corporations to have specified proportion of female directors and directors who are members of underrepresented communities. In Senate Labor and Business, Work Session was 5/25. Moved to Rules with no recommendation.

Bills Awaiting Speaker, President or Governor's Signature

New [SJM 4](#) Urging Congress to enact legislation to begin process of implementing reparations for African Americans based on slavery and discrimination. 6/2 House passed (35,23,2,0)

[SB 569 A](#) Makes unlawful employment practice for the employer to require an employee or prospective employee to possess or present a valid driver's license as a condition of employment or continuation of employment. Requires the employer to accept other forms of identification that are deemed acceptable for purposes of federal forms used to verify identification or employment authorization. Work Session was 3/16. Unanimous vote: 4/7 Senate votes 25-3-2, House chamber, President and Speaker signed on its way to the Governor.

[SB398 A](#) Hate/Bias Crime – ‘Ban the Noose’,. House Chamber vote (54,3,1,2), Speaker signed on 6/4, on its way to the Governor.

[HB 3010](#) Enrolled Requires production companies seeking reimbursement under Oregon Production Investment Fund programs to perform certain actions related to diversity, equity, and inclusion with

respect to production for which reimbursement is sought. 6/1 Senate vote (25,2,3), 6/3 Speaker signed

In Chamber 2nd Reading

[HB 3041 B](#) at the request of Basic Rights Oregon, Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum, Labor Commissioner Val Hoyle. Removes "gender identity" from the definition of "sexual orientation" in ORS 174.100 and creates a stand-alone definition of "gender identity" in ORS 174.100. [Hearing 2/10, Work Session 3/30](#) Unanimous do pass with [-1](#) 4/15 House passed (52-2-4-2). First reading in the senate April 19. Senate Judiciary Committee [Public](#) Hearing was [4/29](#), Work session (4,3,0,0) , 6/3, Chamber 2nd Reading in the Senate.

[SB 289](#) A Prohibits person convicted of bias crime committed while on state waters or publicly owned outdoor recreation land from entering area under jurisdiction of State Parks and Recreation Department. Directs State Marine Board to revoke certain privileges from person convicted of bias crime committed while on state waters or publicly owned outdoor recreation land. Adds bias crime conviction to circumstances in which court may order State Fish and Wildlife Commission to revoke licenses, tags and permits. Work Session was 5/25, unanimously passed out of the committee. 6/3: House Chamber Rules suspended. Carried over to June 7, 2021

Governor Signed

[Senate Bill 704](#) explicitly bars defendants from arguing they were under an "extreme emotional disturbance" after learning their victim's gender identity or sexual orientation. 5/17 President and Speaker signed; governor signed 5/21.: [Oregon Lawmakers vote](#) to ban 'LGBTQ panic defense' by accused murderers.

[SB 282](#) Extends grace period for repayment of residential rent accrued during emergency period of April 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021, until February 28, 2022. Prohibits residential landlord from reporting

nonpayment of rent accrued during emergency period to credit bureaus. Prohibits residential landlord from screening prospective tenants based on nonpayment of rent accrued during grace period. Allows certain defendants to set aside and seal judgments of evictions based on claims arising during grace period. Limits certain restrictions on residential tenant's guests. 5/19 Governor signed

[HB 2526](#) Designates the second Monday of October of each year as Indigenous Peoples' Day. In Senate Rules, public hearing May 4 and Work session was May 6, (3 aye, 1 nay, 2 excused) Cmt, Governor signed 6/1

[HB 2508 Enrolled](#) House passes (56-1-3). Adds Telemedicine to Oregon Health Authority. Requires Oregon Health Authority to ensure reimbursement of health services delivered using telemedicine. Modifies requirements for health benefit plan coverage of telemedicine. “...[Improves access in rural Oregon to Health professionals](#)...”, Rep. Prusak, a Board Certified Registered Nurse and Family Nurse Practitioner, believes that by extending parity for telehealth services, the state will “be able to reach, and extend access, to citizens in rural and urban areas with mobility issues...” Legislature Press Release: ‘[House Democrats Lead on Increasing Telehealth Access for Vulnerable Populations](#)’ - HB 2508 will make telehealth services accessible to Oregonians, especially rural, senior, BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities.” In Senate Cmt Health Care, Speaker and president signed on 5/25. Governor signed 6/1

[HB 2583 A](#) For cities only, eliminates any max number of non-related people per home, Governor signed 5/12. ‘[Oregon Joins Washington](#) to allow use of more empty rooms’.

[HB 2358](#), Requiring overtime pay for agricultural workers (Shirley Weathers)

The bill has been in House Rules since 3/12/2021. LWVOR has sent testimony in support to both sets of Committee members and bill sponsors and we will continue to hope for action.

