

# Social Policy

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3/1/2021

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

## Gun Safety (Marge Easley)

The League delivered testimony on February 22 in Senate Judiciary for [SB 554](#), which allows local jurisdictions, including cities, counties, school districts, and universities, to adopt ordinances limiting possession of firearms in public buildings by holders of concealed handgun licenses (CHLs). This would be in keeping with the prohibition of firearms in federal public buildings and give local jurisdictions the ability to decide whether firearms should be excluded from public buildings in their community. League testimony highlighted the fact there has been a huge increase in gun purchases and applications for CHLs in Oregon during the past year and that, given the low bar for obtaining a CHL in Oregon, CHL holders should not be awarded a special exemption to carry firearms in public buildings. At a work session on February 25, the bill passed out of committee with a do-pass recommendation on a party line vote, following an emotional and acrimonious committee discussion.

## Human Services (Karen Nibler)

The Human Services and Judiciary Committees were sailing full steam ahead this past week. House Human Services covered the 211 call in information line, mandatory reporting of child abuse and domestic violence services in the Self Sufficiency program.

Senate Human Services covered Child Welfare rules and food benefit programs. SB 555 proposed a program for recipients of SNAP benefits to purchase fruits and vegetables from farmer's markets and farm share sites. House Human Services proposed to transfer the 211 information line to the Department of Human Services in HB 2119. Continuation of Domestic Violence Survivors Assistance in Self Sufficiency Programs was heard in HB 2754. Another proposal to fund Runaway and Homeless Youth in HB 2544 was held over until next week. Read the HB 2544 testimony [here](#).

The Senate Judiciary Committee considered SB 218 on conditional discharge after completion of Specialty Court Programs and SB 397 on expungement of criminal records. A workgroup will be appointed to make recommendations on SB 422 on the limitation of juvenile court fees. The juvenile records expunction was heard earlier in SB 575 -1 and has a work session on March 1. Read SB 575 letter.

Senate Education discussed SB 736, which covered behavioral issues in the school setting and formation of a Task Force on Restorative Justice with members from schools, juvenile departments and social agencies. An amendment will add a Juvenile Judge as a member of this task force. Ways and Means Human Services discussed the Psychiatric Security Review Board, SB 5029, which supervises the patients released from the Oregon State Hospital into the community. The Board Director presented slides on OSH and PSRB services for those who were evaluated for ability to stand trial, those who were guilty except for insanity, and those who were civil commitments. Those released to the community need mental health providers and services and permanent housing options. The recidivism rate is below 0.1% for supervised patients.

## Healthcare (Bill Walsh)

It was a good week in the Senate Health Care Committee (SHC). My prediction: the HOPE act, [SJR 12](#), will pass both chambers (barring a walkout) and we will see it on the 2022 general election ballot. The bill is simple and meets the League's gold standard. The proposed amendment to the Oregon Constitution reads:

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.

Senate HC Public Hearings included [SCR 3](#), a wonderful in memoriam tribute to Rep. Mitch Greenlick by legislators, staff, and colleagues; SJR 12, his HOPE Amendment; and [SB 428](#), Senator Manning's bill to extend the timeline of the Universal Health Care Task Force; [SB 110](#), that repeals the sunset of the Early Discussion and Resolution program; and [SB 558](#) and [SB 560](#), attempts to give consumers a greater share of drug rebates savings. These drug bills brought out opposition from insurers, the Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBM) Association, and large health care systems. In Work Sessions, Senate HC passed [SB 39](#) and [SB 40](#), dealing with the Oregon Board of Nursing matters; [SB 64](#), [SB 65](#), and [SB 70](#), relating to Oregon Health Authority regulatory powers and the Regional Health Equity Coalition; [SB 98](#), [SB 99](#), and [SB 100](#), providing enforcement powers to the Board of Medical Imaging. Senator Dallas Heard voted "No" on all these bills because the Capitol is not open to citizens.

The House Health Care Committee (HHC) also had a busy week. They held Public Hearings on [HB 2390](#), to require insurance coverage for

“pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders associated with streptococcal infections and pediatric acute-onset neuropsychiatric syndrome.” [HB 3011](#) and [HB 3016](#) regarding hospital nurse staffing issues were carried over. [HB 2388](#) expands insurance coverage payment rates for midwives; [HB 2673](#) raises naturopathy rates to those of MDs and Nurse Practitioners. [HB 2328](#) calls for enforcement power to an existing law, but the Department of Consumer and Business Services explained that federal memos covered the situation. HHC had no Work Sessions this week.

## Housing (Nancy Donovan and Debbie Aiona)

Our state’s existing housing crisis is exacerbated by the economic downturn caused by COVID-19, impacts from the 2020 wildfires, and recent winter storms. Resources are needed to address our housing challenges across the spectrum from homelessness to affordable rental housing to homeownership. Oregon is moving toward more equitable resource recovery and distribution.

[SB 276](#) would appropriate money from the General Fund to the Housing and Community Services Department to provide grants to Community Action Agencies, who in turn will award loans, grants or other financial assistance to repair and rehabilitate low-income residences. A public hearing was held by the Senate Housing and Development Committee on 2/9.

[HB 2842](#) is an environmental justice bill sponsored by Representatives Marsh, Power and Pham of the House Committee on Housing, to create a Healthy Homes Program within the Oregon Health Authority. Grants will be given to low income households and landlords to keep people safe from the hazards of a changing climate. With extreme heat events and hazardous wildfire smoke days, homes need both cooling and air filtration. Providing critical home repairs will contribute to housing stability and help prevent displacement. The League provided testimony in support of HB 2842. See also the Climate Report.

<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2021R1/Committees/HHOUS/2021-02-11-08-00/HB2842/Details>

[SB 291](#) is the Governor's bill to conduct a study of laws related to racial justice in housing and homelessness in consultation with the Racial Justice Council's Housing and Homeless Committee. The study will focus on policy changes to address racial equality. The Senate Housing and Development Committee held a hearing on this bill on 2/11.

[HB 2004](#) and [HB 2006](#) would ease the ability to locate emergency shelters in communities. It also would significantly increase funding to address the needs of persons experiencing homelessness, and help them transition to safe and affordable permanent housing.

The House Committee on Housing held a public hearing on 2/23 on [HB 2006](#), which includes the flexibility to site shelters for people experiencing homelessness. [HB 2004](#) will be amended to include funding for shelters and navigation centers. In addition, the Committee heard [HB 2163](#), which will be amended to propose a long-term rent assistance program for youth experiencing homelessness. The Governor's budget has proposed \$4.5 million for this program.

[HB 2584](#) would increase the total amount of tax credits for the Oregon Affordable Housing Tax Credit. The OAHTC is a state income tax credit that produces lower rents for low-income renters in affordable housing projects. This bill will move to the Joint Committee on Tax Expenditures. A work session was held on 2/18 after a public hearing on 1/28.

[SB 458](#) is Habitat Oregon's bill to allow lots to be divided more easily for middle housing to incentivize homeownership. A goal is to increase affordable homeownership to help address significant racial disparities by assisting BIPOC households. The Senate Housing and Development Committee held a hearing on 2/18.

[HB 3026](#) will make it easier for people experiencing homelessness to access identification cards. The House Committee on Human Services

held a public hearing on 2/24. Oregon ID cards are administered by ODOT-DMV, and serve as a critical prerequisite for many other essential services, such as obtaining shelter, finding employment, and accessing social services. For those experiencing homelessness, obtaining an ID card can be a substantial challenge and barrier to finding stable housing.

ODOT-DMV supports this bill. They currently partner with many nonprofit organizations to serve unhoused individuals. These organizations assist their clients in navigating the application process for an ID card, and often cover the cost on behalf of their client. House Bill 3026 would formalize this partnership, by allowing ODOT to establish rules, and enroll participating nonprofit organizations. Qualifying nonprofits would sign up as participating members, allowing them to certify that an individual is currently experiencing homelessness and thereby eligible for an ID card fee waiver.

## Immigration (Claudia Keith)

Priority Bills - May have testimony

[SB 778](#) Establishes Office of Immigrant and Refugee Advancement to implement and oversee statewide immigrant and refugee integration strategy. Directs Governor to appoint director of office. Appropriates funds to office. Declares emergency, effective on passage. Sponsors: Sen Jama, Wagner, Dembrow, Rep Campos, Meek, Pham, Ruiz.

[SB 718](#) Appropriates moneys from the General Fund to the Department of Human Services to award grants to refugee resettlement agencies to provide specified services to refugees.

Following, no testimony planned at this time. Senator Dembrow, Jama, Representative Campos

[HB 2167 : Governor Kate Brown Calls on Legislature to Codify the Racial Justice Council Into State Law](#) 2/25 Press Release.

Requires Office of the Governor to study and make recommendations for state boards and commissions on payment of a per diem to members; provision of language access services and reimbursement for childcare during meetings; and permitting the appointing authority to disregard statutory membership requirements if requirements prevent an appointing authority from appointing members representing the diversity of Oregonians (More details and background [HERE](#))

Governors Press Release [Here](#)

HB 3115 [Homeless Rights](#)

Provides that local law regulating sitting, lying, sleeping or keeping warm and dry outdoors on public property that is open to the public must be objectively reasonable as to time, place and manner with regards to persons experiencing homelessness. Creates affirmative defense to charge of violating such local law that law is not objectively reasonable. Creates cause of action for person experiencing homelessness to challenge objective reasonableness of such local law. Authorizes court to award attorney fees to the prevailing plaintiff in such suit ... (March 9 Hearing)

The League is following these Bills:

[SJM 1](#) Children's Institute: Urges Congress to enact legislation implementing internal Immigration and Customs Enforcement policy prohibiting enforcement actions in sensitive locations.

[SB 389](#) Dembrow, Fredrick, Gelser: Directs Oregon Department of Administrative Services to award grants to eligible agencies to provide immigration-related services and supports, and education and outreach, to immigrant communities. Requires agencies that receive grants to report to department. Requires department to annually report to interim committee of the Legislative Assembly related to immigration.

[SB 569](#) Gelser, Patterson: Makes unlawful employment practice for employer to require employee or prospective employee to possess or present valid driver's license as condition of employment or continuation of employment.

[HB 2161](#) Relating to a Racial Justice Council; Directs office of Governor to study laws related to economic opportunity and provide results of study to appropriate interim committees of Legislative Assembly.

[HB 3041](#) Removes "gender identity" from definition of "sexual orientation" in ORS 174.100 and creates stand-alone definition of "gender identity" in ORS 174.100. ( work session 3/1 in House Committee On Judiciary House Subcommittee On Civil Law).

[SJM 4](#) Sen Fredrick: Urges Congress to enact legislation to begin process of implementing reparations for African Americans based on slavery and discrimination.

[SB 618](#) Sen Frederick Directs Oregon Department of Administrative Services to study methods of providing reparations for slavery to Black Oregonians and report to appropriate committee or interim committee of Legislative Assembly no later than September 15, 2022.

[SB 0070](#) 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 utilizing regional health equity coalition model throughout state.

Find these Bills in other Legislative Reports:

Education: [HB 2697](#) and [HB 2937](#). League Testimony posted, Related to Hate and bias behavior and symbols in schools. [HB 2496](#) Exemption from non-resident tuition fees for certain Pacific Islander students - likely to pass.

NR & CE [SB 289](#) directs office of Governor, in consultation with Racial Justice Council's Environmental Equity Committee, to study laws related to environment.

[SB 286](#) renames Environmental Justice Task Force as Environmental Justice Council. Establishes council within Department of Environmental Quality. Modifies membership and duties of council. Modifies definition of "natural resource agency." Directs council to develop cumulative impact analysis.

## Criminal Justice

[HB 2169](#) Relating to a Racial Justice Council.

## Housing and Homeless

[SB 291](#) Relating to a Racial Justice Council, directs office of the Governor, in consultation with Racial Justice Council's Housing and Homelessness Committee, to study laws related to housing and to provide results to interim committees of Legislative Assembly no later than September 15, 2022.