

2022 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The 2022 Legislative Session officially came to a close on March 4, three days earlier than the official deadline. Having finished all their legislative actions early, the House and Senate both declared sine die (or last day) on Friday, marking the end of another historic session.

The 2022 Legislative Session was once again conducted in a virtual world. While the challenges of holding a virtual session have certainly presented themselves over the past two years, there is one upside that many argue should continue permanently: the ability for all Oregonians to testify virtually rather than in person. In-person testimony can limit the voices of Oregonians unable to make the commute to Salem (or take the time off from work needed to do so). Virtual testimony removes this barrier.

The opportunity to testify from anywhere in the state made for some exciting public hearings. The most notable of the session revolved around farmworker overtime ([HB 4002](#)), which generated so much input from the public and members of the Legislature that legislative leadership created an entirely new committee just to address this legislation. Despite mounting difficulties, this historic piece of legislation passed on March 3.

Many other long-awaited pieces of legislation passed this session, especially to address the rising costs of living such as financial assistance for housing, health care, and child care. The Legislature also passed legislation to add more summer learning programs for kids, build back our workforce, address rising crime rates, and slow climate change. Both chambers made impressive progress on their priorities — nearly half of all the legislation introduced this session passed (a whopping 47%). **In total, the Legislature passed 127 measures.**

Of the passed measures, 73 started in the House and 54 started in the Senate — meaning the House passed nearly 43% of its total introduced legislation, and the Senate passed just over 53%. For those following our newsletter, this means big news for the Senate: they won the 2022 Amazing Legislative Race!

Most measures are now awaiting signatures from the Governor and subsequent implementation — ready to become law, pending any veto notices issued by the Governor.

Despite it being a short session with just 35 days to work on legislation, both chambers had impressive accomplishments. In short sessions, legislators typically focus on technical fixes to long-session bills or simple legislation, but 2022 proved different: with Oregon's economy booming at an unprecedented rate, members took the opportunity to push for big investments and robust legislation.



Some of the **highlights for the Senate Democratic Caucus** included a \$400 million package of investments to reduce homelessness; \$132 million invested into the behavioral health workforce; \$200 million towards building career pathways in the health care, manufacturing and construction workforces; preserving access to the Oregon Health Plan for 400,000 Oregonians; and \$100 million to recruit and retain our education workforce.

The **House Democratic Caucus celebrated many of the same victories** this session, along with the coordination of pilot programs to respond to Oregon's housing crisis; \$100 million invested into child care; \$300 million to increase summer learning support; \$100 million towards rural infrastructure projects; expanding Oregonians' access to high-speed broadband; increasing access to loans for small businesses; generating \$600 one-time payments to working families; and several key investments in community-based violence prevention programs and climate resilience projects.

While working on these historic investments, the Legislature was dealing with significant changes in membership and leadership — with a record number of retirements due to the upcoming election. Over the past several months, the Legislature had to appoint a new House Minority Leader, a new House Majority Leader, a new Speaker of the House, and a new co-chair to Oregon's joint budget committee.

Now that the session has ended, we're turning the page and entering a whole new season: campaign season. Several other retirements are on the horizon as campaigns begin for Oregon's new congressional and legislative districts.

While midterm elections are always critical for state politics, this year's midterms will be an especially exciting time — with new districts in play, an open Governor's seat, and a growing number of planned retirements, this will be an election season to pay special attention to for both parties, whose makeup in the Oregon Legislature is sure to change for 2023.

March 8 is the final day for Oregonians to file as a candidate on the 2022 ballot. After this date, the candidates for each major party will be finalized and more aggressive campaigning will begin. We'll be keeping our eyes peeled for an interesting primary election, just around the corner on May 17.

2022 LEGISLATIVE PROGRESS

271

Bills introduced this session

127

Bills passed into law



PROGRESS IN EDUCATION

Education saw some big wins this legislative session. In addition to introducing new measures, this short session was an opportunity for education advocates to continue advancing and fine-tuning past legislation.

Among the educational wins achieved this session were: **HB 4124**, which requires ODE to study academic assessments; **SB 1522**, which will allow unions to access graduate student employee contact information; **SB 1572**, which widened the qualifications for Public Service Loan Forgiveness eligibility; and **HB 4030**, which helps identify statutory changes that would simplify the process for out-of-state educators to become licensed in Oregon, and takes critical steps to reduce or suspend unnecessary requirements that discourage our educators from renewing their licenses.

Additional legislative priorities this session included **SB 1521**, which authorizes district school boards to terminate superintendents without cause (if certain conditions are met), and **HB 4114**, which requires members of a district school board to file verified statements of economic interest with the Oregon Government Ethics Commission. The Legislature also presented and debated on the findings of [AGB's Governance Review of Oregon's Public Universities](#), which was published just prior to the start of the session and will be followed by an interim workgroup.

Although some priorities this session included simple technical fixes, there were significant investments approved for the HECC to distribute throughout the state.

Key education investments included: **\$14.6 million to the University of Oregon** for scientific equipment, and the Oregon Hazards Lab Wildfire Camera Network; **\$16.5 million to Western Oregon University** to support the main steam line, **\$18.1 million to Oregon State University** for the Hatfield Housing project, repair and maintenance for the Pacific Storm research vessel, the Innovation District Landfill Project, the Extension Service's Oregon Bee Project, and the modernization of the Oregon Agricultural Research Center; **\$755,000 to Southwestern Oregon Community College** for new fire training tower; **\$577,500 to Linn-Benton Community College** for the Takena Hall elevator; **\$2.5 million to Treasure Valley Community College** for its Renewable Energy Apprenticeship Program; and **\$5 million to Eastern Oregon University** for the Visual and Performing Scholarship, and the restoration of the Grand Staircase.

In addition, the HECC received \$3.8 million for the Oregon Teachers Scholar Program, \$1 million for Educator Equity Plan Grants, and \$7.5 million for the Strong Start Program.

The Legislature also made key investments in workforce education and training programs, to assist with Oregon's growing workforce crisis in key industries — specifically health care, manufacturing and construction. This \$200 million will primarily be administered by the HECC and will help remove barriers to entry for thousands of Oregon families seeking good-paying jobs.

The child care workforce also received a substantial investment this legislative session, with a historic \$100 million child care investment package passed with bipartisan support. This legislation will go to increasing the ERDC subsidy rates for families who qualify for this child care assistance program, as well as offering grants to child care providers wanting to start up new — or expand existing — child care programs across the state.

This session was, unfortunately, among the last for several key educational advocates in the Legislature — including Chair of the House Education Committee, Rep. Alonso León, who has announced she will seek Oregon's 6th congressional district seat. Rep. Reardon, a long-time member of the House Education Committee and former Chair of the Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee, has also announced his retirement. Rep. Smith Warner, who has served on several education related committees and led the charge to pass the Student Success Act in 2019, will also not be seeking re-election. The Legislature will certainly miss these, and several other, education advocates.

CLIENT OVERVIEW

Our team was proud to support the work of AFT-Oregon this legislative session and be your eyes, ears and amplified voice in Salem — and across Zoom. We were able to deepen the awareness of AFT-Oregon's mission and goals with Oregon Senators and Representatives, their staff, our higher education coalition partners, and members of the Governor's office.

As your legislative champions, we provided direct lobbying of state leaders — tracking the concerns, support, progress and changes for each of AFT's priority bills. Through direct legislator meetings, collaboration with partner unions, feedback from university and AFT members, testimony tracking and drafting — as well as a comprehensive understanding of the current needs within higher education — our team was able to provide big wins for AFT-Oregon this session!

Prior to the start of the session, we facilitated a number of important meetings with legislators on your behalf, meeting with both champion legislators in the education committees, and those in opposition of AFT's priority bills, to advance your top priorities.

32+ KEY CONNECTIONS

In addition to the 17 legislative office meetings that AFT-Oregon facilitated for your virtual lobby day on February 18, AFT-Oregon's advocacy efforts also included pre-session one-on-one meetings with over **10 key Representatives** and **5 key Senators** — educating key members of Senate and House Education Committee on AFT-Oregon's 2022 Legislative Agenda.



AFT-OREGON LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES

Public Student Loan Forgiveness Technical Fixes & Expansion | HB 1572B

PASSED: Oregon Senate 24-2 | Oregon House 58-0

As a follow up to implementation challenges with HB 3255, which passed during the 2021 Legislative Session, SB 1572B provides statutory clarity that community colleges and universities are required to comply with PSLF notification requirements and the application of a weekly hour multiplier for faculty. SB 1572B also clarified that for every one hour of assigned lecture time an educator works, they should be credited for an additional 4.35 hours for the purposes of certifying eligibility for the Federal Public Student Loan Forgiveness Program. Additionally, SB 1572B provides a directive for universities and colleges to apply the 4.35 hour multiplier for eligible hours retroactively. This legislation also expressly provides that a higher multiplier can be bargained locally and also requires an education employer to use a 30 hour threshold in defining full time for the purposes of PSLF.

Graduate Employee Contact Information Sharing | SB 1522 (Senate Education Omnibus)

PASSED: Oregon Senate 22-4 | Oregon House 38-20

SB 1522 (Section 4) requires a public university to create a waiver form for graduate student employees to waive privacy rights to personal/work contact information. These provisions also require that the form be signed as a condition of employment for any graduate student who wishes to be employed by the public university. SB 1522 will ensure that graduate student employee unions obtain all contact information that is required in HB 2016, which passed during the 2019 session.

Part-Time Faculty Health Care Technical Fixes | SB 1522 (Senate Education Omnibus)

PASSED: Oregon Senate 22-4 | Oregon House 38-20

SB 1522 (Section 30) makes full-time equivalency eligibility determined on an average rather than meeting FTE threshold for each academic term. Additionally, SB 1522 changes the schedule for determining eligibility to an annual determination rather than a semi-annual determination. These provisions apply to the 2022 open enrollment period.

Farmworker Overtime | HB 4002

PASSED: Oregon Senate 17-10 | Oregon House: 37-23

As a coalition partner, AFT actively supported HB 4002 which ensures overtime compensation is expanded to Oregon's agricultural sector workers. The bill, as passed, sets maximum allowable hours an agricultural worker may work before overtime compensation is required. The maximum starts at 55 hours/week for 2023 and 2024, 48 hours/week for 2025 and 2026, and ultimately phases into a 40 hour/week overtime requirement effective in 2027. HB 4002 also created a refundable tax credit for employers to offset cost increases — notably, the refundable tax credit is more generous for smaller employers, particularly dairies with fewer than 25 employees.

NEXT STEPS

Joint Taskforce on Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education (JTUSHE)

Starting in late March and going through the summer, the Legislature's JTUSHE will be gearing up with several campus/site visits at community colleges and universities to hear feedback from education stakeholders about policy changes and investments to increase higher education outcomes for traditionally underrepresented students. This is a vital opportunity for AFT-Oregon members to proactively engage through campus visits and task force meetings. Similar to the Joint Committee on Student Success in 2019, this task force will likely generate proposed education legislative proposals for the 2023 Legislative Session.

2023 Legislative Agenda Survey

Similar to previous short legislative interim periods, AFT-Oregon should consider sending out a 2023 Legislative Agenda survey to receive feedback from members on which legislative proposals AFT-Oregon should proactively support during the 2023 Session. With the deadline to submit legislative concepts for pre-session filing overlapping with the start of the academic year, the PLAC should consider developing a survey and circulating with members prior to the summer break so that ample time is available to gather feedback, secure legislative sponsors, build coalition support, and draft a legislative strategy.

2022 INTERIM CALENDAR

March 8: Candidate Filing Day
May 17: Primary Election
May 18: Oregon Revenue Forecast
May 31: Legislative Task Force Day
June 1-3: Legislative Committee Days
August 31: Oregon Revenue Forecast
September 20: Legislative Task Force Day

September 21-23: Legislative Committee Days
September 23: LC Request Deadline
November 8: General Election
December 5: LC Return Deadline
December 6: Legislative Task Force Day
December 7-9: Legislative Committee Days
December 21: LC Drop Deadline

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