

Student Success Act

Most significantly, Democrats in the Legislature were triumphant in passing a game-changing investment in Oregon schools. **The Student Success Act creates a new business tax dedicated to early learning and K-12 education and is projected to raise an estimated \$2 billion for the next budget cycle.** About half the new money would be divided among districts based on enrollment. The rest would go to early learning and statewide initiatives to support students.

The bill passed on a party-line vote, without a single Republican voting in support. Following Governor Brown's signature, the business group Oregon Manufacturers and Commerce announced that they would seek to refer the law to the voters. Since their announcement, timber interests have already dedicated \$1 million to the effort to refer the bill. **If they are successful in meeting the signature threshold for a referral, a special statewide election to uphold the Student Success Act will be held on January 21st, 2020. If you see signature gathering efforts in your community, please [report these activities at this link.](#)**

DPO's top Legislative Action Items for the 2019 Session:

#1 Health Care

One the final day of Session, the Legislature voted in support of the DPO's number one legislative priority, a bill to draw the roadmap to universal health care in Oregon.

[SB 770](#) will create a Health Care for All Board comprising members from a variety of backgrounds, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate. Those board members will plan and supervise the development, implementation and management of the universal health care plan, with final approval from the Oregon Legislature.

#2 Clean Energy Jobs

Arguably the biggest disappointment of the 2019 Session, after a week-long walk out by the Senate Republicans, [HB 2020](#) did not receive a vote in the Senate and was shelved in the final days of session. In response to this setback, Governor Kate Brown has spoken publicly about the executive actions she may take to implement cap and invest policies. The DPO will provide updates on action items as we become aware of future opportunities to support this legislation.

#3 Campaign Finance Reform

Three significant campaign finance reform bills made it across the finish line in the final days of the Legislative session.

- [SJR 18](#) -- Refers a Constitutional amendment to voters in the 2020 November election to allow state and local laws that require campaign finance-related disclosures or that limit,

to the extent permitted under the federal constitution, political contributions and expenditures.

- [HB 2716](#) -- Requires that communication in support of or opposition to a candidate to state the name of the person who paid for communication (“paid for by”). In specified circumstances, donor information will also need to be listed.
- [HB 2983](#) -- Requires certain groups and organizations that make political communications in excess of specified amounts to disclose information related to donations that exceed \$10,000. This bill will help shed daylight on independent expenditures in political contests.

#4 Gun Safety

While an omnibus gun safety bill was not successful this session, a separate, more narrowly tailored bill, [HB 2013](#), was passed and signed in the law. This bill closes the “intimate partner loophole,” by establishing that a person unlawfully and knowingly possesses a firearm when he or she is the subject of a court order and does not request or attend a hearing within the required time period. It also defines the way and time period within which those who are prohibited from possessing firearms must turn their guns over to law enforcement, a licensed gun dealer, or a safe third party. Advocates have vowed to reintroduce gun safety legislation in the upcoming 2020 Short Session.

#5 Criminal Justice Reform

Lawmakers accomplished a laundry list of criminal justice reforms this session, including, but not limited to:

- [SB 420](#): Marijuana conviction expungement
- [SB 577](#): reforms statues addresses hate crimes, or “bias crime.”
- [SB 726](#): Protections for survivors of workplace harassment
- [SB 995](#): Extends period a survivor can file for a Sexual Assault Protective Order
- [SB 1008](#): Establishes process for second-look hearings, giving juveniles a second chance to reform instead of becoming hardened criminals
- [SB 1013](#): Death penalty reform
- [HB 2015](#): Improving public safety by making driver licenses available to all

In closing, a final update on a couple of process bills that the DPO supported:

[HB 2491](#) was passed to make changes to the process to write in nominees for Precinct Committee Persons (PCPs) and remove gender specific language from the PCP process. Because of a drafting error that would delay implementation, the substance of the bill was amended into [SB 224](#) at the end of session. This version repeals and replaces HB 2491. The DPO submitted [testimony](#) in support of the bill.

[SB 630](#) was passed by both chambers and signed into law. The bill allows party central committees to notify members of upcoming meetings by email. Current law requires the notification be sent by postal mail. This bill takes effect on January 1, 2020.

More in brief...

In addition to the DPO priority issues above, the Democratically led Legislature was successful in passing a large number of progressive policies. A partial list includes:

- The most comprehensive paid family and medical leave program in the nation
- Major environmental victories including stopping federal rollbacks of the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, a ban on single use plastic bags and straws, and a moratorium on nearshore drilling and fracking
- Support for workers' rights by strengthening the ability of public employee unions to organize in the workplace
- Paid postage for all Oregon ballots starting in 2020
- Historic investments in mental health care, foster care, and other critical safety net services
- Passed groundbreaking policies designed to protect renters, prevent homelessness, preserve affordable housing, and increase housing supply.
- Joining the National Popular Vote compact

Further information on legislative accomplishments [can be found from the Senate Democratic Caucus](#) (House Democratic Caucus accomplishment list not available yet).