

OSBA Legislative Highlights



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OF OREGON



January 13, 2017

Legislative Assembly enjoys pomp before tackling state circumstances



Gov. Kate Brown

Oregon's 79th Legislative Assembly began its work this week in Salem with the usual pomp and circumstance, but there were also nods to the serious and tough work ahead.

Speaking to a joint session of the Legislature, Gov. Kate Brown called for a spirit of bipartisanship for the upcoming session, calling on Oregon lawmakers to set aside their

differences to work together to tackle Oregon's \$1.7 billion revenue shortfall.

"We have to come together and know that we are all on the same side," Brown said. She also said Oregonians should refrain from attacks on civil rights.

"We must guard against prejudice based on race, ethnicity, religion or belief," Brown said to applause. "We must not allow the rights of any one person or class of people to be degraded in any way. We must stand for our veterans. We must defend the rights of LGBTQ Oregonians."

Rep. Tina Kotek, who was elected speaker of the House for the third time, struck a similar chord in her opening remarks for the session. Focusing on equity, Kotek (D-Portland), began by acknowledging that policymakers disagree about the specifics of any given initiative.



Rep. Tina Kotek

"I believe," Kotek said, "that underneath those disagreements, driving us forward and uniting us in this work, is the shared belief that every Oregonian deserves equal justice, equal opportunity and equal dignity."

Senate President Peter Courtney took a lower-key approach to his remarks, after being elected to a record-setting eighth term as Senate president. Courtney (D-Salem) marveled that all 30 senators were present on the Senate floor despite weather that prevented the Portland State Chamber Choir from performing.

Although Brown, Kotek and Courtney refrained from outlining specific policy positions during their individual

remarks, many issues were alluded to. Revenue reform, PERS reform, housing legislation, education funding, the high school graduation rate, firearms legislation, health care subsidies, and a potential transportation package were all mentioned. Brown cited the desire to keep moving forward on a variety of issues.



Sen. Peter Courtney

"We got stuff done during the 2016 short session," she said. "We raised the minimum wage, ... responded to the tragedy at Umpqua Community College, ... upheld the tradition of leading on environmental stewardship. ... Under my leadership, we will continue to move Oregon forward."

In her speech, Brown also took time to commend the service to Oregon of state Rep. Vic Gilliam (R-Silverton), who has continued his work as a state representative despite his battle with ALS and the need to use a wheelchair.



Rep. Vic Gilliam

In addition to its opening session ceremonies, the Legislature introduced more than 1,500 bills in its first days of action. Many of these bills will affect public schools. The OSBA Legislative Services team has reviewed all bills and is tracking more than 200 out of this first-introduced series. Contact OSBA Interim Legislative Director Lori Sattenspiel (lsattenspiel@osba.org) with any questions about the bills.

As has been the practice for several sessions, the Legislature only met in its "organizational session" for three days and has adjourned until Feb. 1. At that time, the Legislature will begin in earnest and should wrap up its work in late June or early July.

The House of Representatives swore in all 60 members, including 10 new members. The Senate swore in four new members.

Brown was sworn in for her first term as Oregon's elected governor. Previously, she had been completing the term of office following Gov. John Kitzhaber's resignation on Feb. 18, 2015. Her recent election means that she will serve two more years, until the next gubernatorial election in 2018.

OSBA Legislative Services enters new session with new team

OSBA began 2017 in a state of transition. Jim Green, who was the OSBA deputy executive director and headed Legislative Services, assumed the OSBA executive director role after the retirement of Betsy Miller-Jones. As executive director, he will continue to work on pressing legislative issues, including revenue reform and PERS.

Lori Sattenspiel has taken over as the interim legislative director and will lead the efforts in the Capitol during the 79th legislative session. In late fall, Richard Donovan joined the team. Richard came to OSBA from the Capitol, where he was a well-respected committee administrator for both the House and Senate education committees. Richard had to hit the ground running, as most OSBA members were introduced to him during the fall regional meetings in September and October.

Legislative Services has also added a new dimension to the team, Gallatin Public Affairs. Gallatin will support the legislative efforts for 2017 and the short session in 2018. Gallatin brings experience in lobbying education and K-12 issues. We look forward to the new addition and support as the 2017 session gets underway Feb. 1.



Jim Green



Lori Sattenspiel



Richard Donovan

Three more school board members add education voices to Legislature

The 2017 legislative session will enjoy the benefit of having a number of former and current school board members taking seats in the Legislature. In 2015-16, the Legislature included several former and two sitting school board members. This election cycle brought three more current school board members to the legislative ranks.

Rep. Janeen Sollman (D-Hillsboro) has been on the Hillsboro School Board since 2009. As a member of the Hillsboro School Board, Rep. Sollman understands that education is the key to opportunity. She has been a vocal advocate for making sure schools have the resources they need to keep teachers, reduce class sizes and make investments in CTE and dual-credit programs.



Rep. Janeen Sollman

Rep. Diego Hernandez (D-Portland) is a member of the Reynolds School Board. Rep. Hernandez has been a vocal proponent of schools, saying that he has “the experience, education and dedication it takes to fight for great schools and safer communities, and to advocate for a strong economy that supports working families and small businesses.”



Rep. Diego Hernandez

Rep. David Brock Smith (R-Gold Beach) has been a Port Orford-Langlois School Board member for eight years. Rep. Smith has stressed his experience in his community and commitment to all Oregonians, saying, “I have been dedicated to the fish, farm, forest industries; education; public health; and safety and veteran services to the residents of southwest Oregon, focusing on economic development for our communities, their residents and industries.”



Rep. David Brock Smith

Congratulations to the newly elected legislators. OSBA looks forward to working with you and your colleagues on pressing educational issues during the session.

A quick look ahead

Jan. 20: Co-chairs’ budget framework expected to be released

Feb. 1: 79th legislative session convenes – must adjourn by July 9

Feb. 22: Quarterly revenue forecast

Contact your legislator

Find your legislators’ contact information on the Oregon Legislature’s website:

- House – www.oregonlegislature.gov/house
- Senate – www.oregonlegislature.gov/senate

To contact your legislator by phone, call the Capitol Switchboard at 1-800-332-2313.