

Oregon Friends Legislative Newsletter for April 8, 2017

Friends,

In lieu of a tally of each bill we are following, here is an update on action items on specific issues. Mary Priem and Karen Mitzner attended Senator Lew Frederick's constituent coffee on April 8, and some of the information here is from Mary's notes at that event.

Things we can do, in general:

1. See OCPP (Oregon Center for Public Policy) site, which has a list of ideas for raising revenue, including a gross receipts tax. (Senator Frederick pointed out that there is no actual bill for a gross receipts tax yet, but there is already a TV ad against the not-yet-existent bill.)
2. Contact Republican legislators like Senator Ted Ferrioli and Senator Bill Hansell; they need to know these are bipartisan issues -- gun safety, revenue, etc.
3. "Talk to everyone you know." Especially outside of the Portland area.
4. Support businesses that support being taxed their fair share. New Seasons Market is a prime example. Exert pressure on opponents like the big out-of-state grocery chains.
5. A constituent-coffee attendee from the Multnomah County Democrats invited us all to the Second Thursday Evening "Neighbor to Neighbor" dialogues at Tabor Space.

6. Attend your legislators' constituent coffees and town halls, and keep the dialogue going.

Specific Issue Areas:

Housing:

HB 2004 passed the House in amended form. Although it gives more leeway to landlords, it still prohibits most no-cause evictions in Oregon, **and** it removes the state preemption on setting rental rates, so that cities and counties will be free to pass their own "rent stabilization" ordinances (the somewhat loaded term "rent control" is being avoided). This is a major accomplishment, and it is thanks to the efforts all who testified, attended hearings, wrote letters, made phone calls, etc. The bill goes on to its Senate Committee, and will need more support and effort as its fate in the Senate is uncertain; frequently the opponents of a bill will save their energy until the bill reaches the second chamber. We will keep you posted on its committee assignment (probably the Senate Committee on Human Services) and upcoming hearings.

Senator Lew Frederick reminds us that the housing crisis is state-wide, including Bend, Ashland, and the Oregon coast (where airbnb has precipitated a rental inflation crisis). He says he will be making a strong speech in favor of HB 2004 when it reaches the floor of the Senate.

One observation from your editor: It was very clear, at the committee work session, that many legislators own some rental houses that they consider part of their retirement income plan. Organizing tactics around villifying all landlords, without being

aware of this aspect of the legislators' lives, had proved to be alienating rather than helpful. There is a place here for Friendly talks with legislators who are landlords, speaking to that of God in them.

Racial Justice:

HB 2355, the racial profiling bill, which originated in the Oregon Attorney General's office, has been approved in committee and sent to Ways and Means. It mandates tracking of data on police stops state-wide. It also, significantly, would reclassify possession of drugs, in many cases, from a felony to a misdemeanor and set a maximum sentence at 364 days, just short of a year, so ICE could not use the conviction to arrest undocumented individuals. Senator Frederick pointed out that this very valuable 364-day sentencing provision was suggested by a legislative aide.

Per Senator Lew Frederick: Good chance of success for most of the **Portland NAACP's priority bills**: voter pre-registration for 16-year-olds (passed in the Senate), recording of grand jury proceedings (SB 496, work session on April 13 in Senate Judiciary), HB 2355 on profiling (moved on out of first committee to Ways and Means, as noted above). However, free postage on mail-in ballots is in trouble because it involves expenditure [Senator Dembrow's aide, last week, mentioned a possible compromise of providing more free ballot box locations, which may be all that is possible to pass during this cost-conscious session.]

HB 2845 (ethnic studies curriculum) has a work session Monday, April 10, in the House Committee on Education.

Immigration:

The "Cover All Kids" bills (HB 2726 and SB 558) are in Ways and Means.

The 364-day sentencing provision in HB 2355, as noted above, which provides a shield from ICE.

Breaking news about immigration issues: Senator Frederick shared that on April 7, Oregon Chief Justice Tom Balmer **told ICE to stay out of Oregon courts**, where they had been ambushing undocumented individuals who were there on Oregon court business.

Prisons:

Re-entry bills, regarding incarcerated individuals: There are 6 bills, and it is likely that 5 or all 6 will pass. These have received significant support. One would permit a drivers license for ex-cons who are in apprenticeship programs, so they can get to work.

Gun Safety:

SB 868 -- removing guns from people in mental health crises: Sponsored by Senators Ginny Burdick (D-18), and Senator Brian Boquist (R-12) who had a family tragedy involving a gun. It is remarkable, and encouraging, to have chief sponsors from both sides of the aisle. Senator Boquist has reportedly been attacked by the NRA about this. The bill is scheduled in Senate Judiciary for a **work session on April 17** (the day before the deadline for work

sessions) and will get lots of media attention.

Election Reform:

Breaking news on election reform: Multnomah County had a ballot measure placing a dollar limit on political contributions. This passed, but now the county has referred it to the Oregon Supreme Court for an opinion on whether it is constitutional. However, the county will not present any arguments in favor of it, even though we can be sure that large business interests will be presenting arguments rigorously opposing it.

Environment:

Major Climate and Clean Air hearings and work sessions: This Wednesday, April 12, at 3:00 in the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. Now is the time to take a stand! Consider attending and/or testifying (give notice at least 24 hours in advance, for either in-person or electronic testimony). Please contact Lucinda Hites-Clabaugh of MFM about carpooling.

April 29: People's Climate Movement March

12 to 4 p.m. at Dawson Park, N. Stanton Street & N. Williams Ave., Portland. Join OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon and 350PDX to march for climate justice. Exact time and location are to be determined. Go to opalpdx to sign up for updates as they become available, organizations (with permission from leadership)

can endorse the event, or visit the event Facebook page.

(the above information is from Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon.)

Peacekeepers:

Friends: Consider being a Peacekeeper at the Portland Climate March. Peacekeepers' training will be April 15 with Greenpeace, The Oregon Peace Institute, 350PDX, and Portland Peace Teams. They require that you RSVP and register at <http://bit.ly/2mUi2In>

Additional Climate March information from the Sierra Club of Portland:

WHAT: Portland People's Climate Movement March

WHEN: April 29th, 2017 12:00pm-4:00pm

WHERE: Portland OR: Dawson Park, N. Williams at N Stanton (map) - March route TBA.

WHO: A movement of thousands, led by Oregon Just Transition Alliance, a statewide network of Oregon's frontline communities. We call upon Portland's environmental, racial, social, and economic justice communities and allies to stand with us and support the leadership of most-impacted people.

WHAT: In solidarity with the National People's Climate Movement in Washington, D.C., Portland People's Climate Movement will rally and march! The rally will feature speakers from the frontline communities leading the event. The march will include public education to explain the climate connection to a wide range of racial and social justice issues.

WHY: This year's Portland People's Climate Movement March will draw attention to the intersecting issues facing frontline communities in the struggle for climate justice. Housing, transportation, clean energy, access to green spaces and food, and the struggles for workers' rights, immigrant rights, and the rights of other marginalized communities must all be at the center of this struggle for climate action. April 29th marks the 100th day of a national administration that represents greed at all costs. For people to win over profits, we must demand liberation from an economy built on extraction, exploitation, militarism, and systems of social oppression.

AGENDA:

12:00pm - 1:00pm: spoken program

1:00pm to 3:00pm: march

3:00pm to 4:00pm: rally, mingle, disperse

More info including links to get involved at opalpdx.org/pcm

Oregon Just Transition Alliance (OJTA) builds unity among frontline communities. It's necessary to center the most-impacted people in discussions of climate justice. The Portland PCM platform states, "people of color, low income communities, and rural and tribal people are at the front line of environmental and climate injustice- our communities must lead the efforts to address climate change. Climate change is only a symptom of much deeper crises that are happening worldwide- the ecological crisis, economic crisis, and the crisis of empire. These crises come from the current dominant economy, created by a system that only works for a few which relies on exploitation and extraction of

resources. We must create a system that works for everyone, based on cooperation, close communities, and regenerative processes.” We’re past the tipping point. The threats to frontline communities are present today.

(the above information is from the Sierra Club of Portland.)

This week's newsletter was created by Mary Priem of MFM.
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