

Department of Human Services says \$595M cut will hit several programs

JONATHAN BACH
STATESMAN JOURNAL

The Oregon Department of Human Services sent out a warning May 23: Expect to see services slashed throughout the agency under proposed state budget cuts.

DHS Director Clyde Saiki and top officials from the agency's branches outlined the potential impact of proposed budget reductions unveiled by lawmakers earlier this session.

That impact would create a crater touching

much of the agency.

Under the proposed cuts, DHS would reduce costs by \$285 million in general fund money from its current service level, which means a loss of an additional \$310 million in federal funds, Saiki said during the public meeting at DHS headquarters in Salem.

That translates to losses totaling almost \$600 million.

Officials "spent hours and hours and hours agonizing over what to put on the list, because if we had a preference, we would

put nothing on this list," Saiki said.

Lawmakers' list of cuts came out as they faced an estimated \$1.6 billion budget shortfall. The most current economic forecast cut that shortfall to \$1.4 billion.

"We need to be able to use our resources really wisely and effectively," said Ashley Carson Cottingham, Director of the Aging and People with Disabilities program.

Project Independence

One of the potential reductions would affect "Oregon Project Independence," with an estimated 1,200-person impact each month around the state, she said.

"This program provides personal care, heavy housework or chore services within your own home, and this is for folks that are not on the Medicaid program," Cottingham said.

"So it's a really popular program to get a little bit of light touch support so that you can remain independent for as long as possible and not have to come on to the publicly funded, long-term care," she said.

The average cost for the program is about \$332 per case, compared to a general fund dollar amount of about \$800 for the Medicaid option, Cottingham said.

Disability Services

The Office of Developmental Disability Services may have to narrow the eligibility criteria for who can obtain services, Director Lilia Teninty said.

"People like the idea of a wide door so that lots of people can come through the door, but then potentially access — because we've got a wide door — access only a small amount of services," Teninty said.

Budget cuts would mean "narrowing that door," she said. That may mean raising the number of functional disabilities a person needs to have to obtain services from two to three.

TANF and daycare

Self-Sufficiency Programs would see \$84.6 million dollars in cuts under legislators' proposals, Deputy Director Dan Haun said.

"The really unfortunate thing for the self-sufficiency program is



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there's really only two places that can come from for us," Haun said.

Those are Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and employment-related daycare, he said.

Parents at 48 months in the TANF program would be cut off, with children and parents cut off at 60 months, he said. "We'd have a full-family sanction," Haun said.

The full-family sanction would impact about 970 families right away, and the 48-month sanction would affect 3,952 families, he said, though "that's always a moving target with the TANF program" because people come on and off it as they gain and lose employment.

For employment-related daycare — a supplement for working people who need help with daycare — the proposals would mean cutting an average of roughly 1,000 families per month off of the caseload, Haun said.

Child welfare

Interim Child Welfare Director Laurie Price said reductions would be felt in screener positions within DHS. Those staffers field allegations of abuse.

"It won't impact the number of staff we have today, but it impacts the number of staff we would have tomorrow given our current service level," Price said.

Secondly, cuts would come to the agency's post-adoption services, which are services provided to families who adopt children through DHS, she said.

Under Gov. Kate Brown's proposed budget, child welfare was set to

see an increase in staffing.

Leadership reshuffling

The meeting Tuesday came at a time when the agency is experiencing leadership shuffling. Saiki himself is retiring later this year. Fariborz Pakseresht, who now runs Oregon's juvenile detention system, is set take over Sept. 1.

"Fariborz and I have worked together for a long time," Saiki said Tuesday. "He's one of the best leaders in state government."

The new director's salary will be \$15,459 a month, according to his offer letter. That's \$185,508 a year.

Correspondence obtained through a public records request shows planning for Saiki's retirement has been in the works for some time.

In April, Pakseresht said in a text to Heidi Moawad, Brown's Public Safety Advisor, that the governor's office had been speaking with him about DHS.

"I got an offer letter from Nik (Blosser, Brown's Chief of Staff) yesterday but haven't signed it yet," Pakseresht said in the April 6 text.

In May, Brown announced he would take over the job in September.

In considering the appointment, Brown chose Pakseresht for "his proven track record of strong leadership and innovation at DHS, the Department of Administrative Services and (the Oregon Youth Authority)," according to a spokesperson for the governor's office.

"Gov. Brown expects Fariborz to bring this spir-

it of innovation to modernize DHS and ensure the agency continues to move in the right direction for the benefit of all Oregonians," the spokesperson said.

Saiki's official retirement day is July 30, public records show. He will maintain a foot in the door at DHS during the directorial transition. His last day with the agency is Sept. 30, records show.

With the number of children who spent at least a day in foster care during the 2016 fiscal year edging past 11,100, Lena Alhusseini, who took the helm as the Oregon's child welfare director last November, signaled her resignation last week.

She didn't say why in her resignation letter to DHS officials and declined to comment further on May 22.

The Statesman Journal reported on Sunday Alhusseini saw herself as "targeted and vilified" in March, less than two months before her resignation.

Saiki introduced Price as Alhusseini's interim replacement at the start of the meeting, saying, "She graciously volunteered for the position."

The recruitment process for a permanent child welfare director remains unclear.

"We haven't had a chance with the resignation coming on last week for me to sit down with not just Fariborz but with Laurie and probably the governor's office to talk about how we want to move forward," Saiki said.

Send questions, comments or news tips to jbach@statesmanjournal.com or 503-399-6714. Follow him on Twitter @JonathanMBach.

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Runners

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The run also coincides with State Parks Day on which admission is free to Silver Falls and other Oregon State Parks.

Cost for the 5k and 6-mile runs is \$25 preregistered, \$30 the day of the race. To learn more or register, visit Race Northwest at <http://racenorthwest.com/silverfalls>.



JUSTIN MUCH/APPEAL TRIBUNE

The Silver Falls Challenge course will travel over varied terrain and trails and even behind a waterfall.

OBITUARIES

Harry Montgomery

Dec. 5, 1925 — May 19, 2017

Harry Leroy Montgomery, 91, of Oregon City, died of natural causes at home May 19, 2017. Harry was born Dec. 5, 1925, in Stratton, Colorado, to William and Ruth Montgomery.

Harry captained the 1943 Newberg state champion football team. He served in WWII in the Vancouver shipyard and later as a seaman in the Merchant Marines.

Harry was a line foreman for PGE and retired after 38 years of service. He served as a city councilman in Silverton and an

exalted ruler for the Silverton Elks Lodge BPOE 2210. Harry was an avid outdoors man and will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

He is survived by his wife of 69 years, Ethel Marie Montgomery, his daughter Rebecca Steed, sons Patric and Michael Montgomery, and the numerous grandchildren and great children he adored.

Funeral Mass was held on Thursday, May 25, at St. John the Apostle Catholic Church in Oregon City. He will be laid to rest with full military honors at Willamette National Cemetery in Portland.

Hillside Chapel in Oregon City was entrusted with arrangements. Please visit www.HillsideChapelFH.com to leave a memory for the family.

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Lawrence Emil Bochsler

Oct. 31, 1929 — May 19, 2017

Lawrence Emil Bochsler passed away peacefully at the age of 87. Lawrence (Larry) was born in Mt. Angel to Charles and Francis Bochsler, the youngest of six children.

He lived his entire life in the Silverton and Salem area, except for a brief time in Georgia during his Army service. He owned a farm in Silverton for many years. Lawrence worked and retired as a

surveyor for the Marion County Highway Department. One of his greatest joys was to take a drive on the roads in the county and recount the turns, grades and bridges he surveyed as the roads were built. Lawrence enjoyed being outdoors, especially hunting and fishing.

He was preceded in death by one sister, four brothers and one grandson. Lawrence is survived by his four children: Dan (Linda), Bernie (Regina), Susan (Brian) and Sally. He had five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

The family would like to thank Davenport Place, which cared for him the last three years, and Serenity Hospice. A memorial service will be scheduled at a later date.