

# Appeal Tribune

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 2022 | SILVERTONAPPEAL.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

## Primary elections set

### 36 candidates to vie for governor, many races contested

**Connor Radnovich**

Salem Statesman Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

Primary election races at the local, state and federal levels are now set.

With new legislative and congressional district maps and the parting of many senior political office-holders, this year is shaping up to be one of the most uncertain election cycles in recent Oregon history.

Gov. Kate Brown cannot run for reelection due to term limits, Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, announced he would retire after his current term and a number of senators and representatives are either resigning from office or are leaving after short-

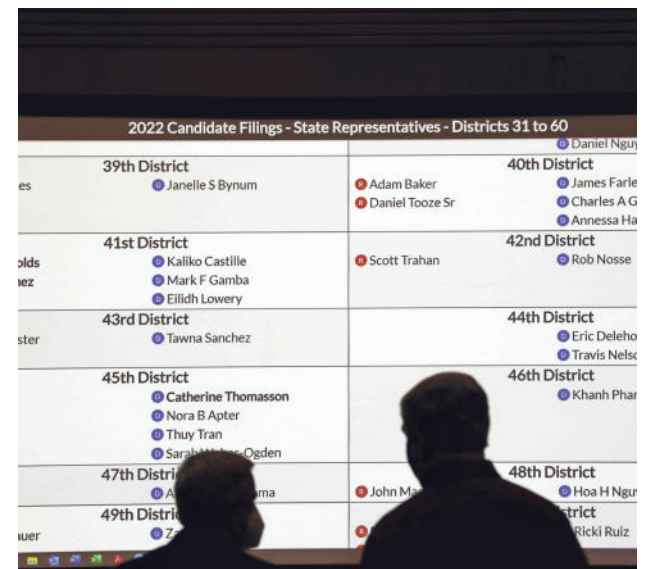
term appointments.

Republicans are looking to break Democrats' multi-year supermajority control of the Oregon House and Senate as well as elect a Republican governor for the first time since 1982. Democrats are pursuing to maintain that control as they weather shifting leadership at the top of the party.

With the legislative session completed and only 10 weeks before the May 17 primary election, some political analysts have remarked on how quiet the races have been so far. Even among serious candidates, the overt indications of the campaign season — such as ubiquitous television political advertisements — have so far been largely absent.

“You have to introduce yourself to the voters. All the forums you go to in the world won't do that. You have to

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Names of the 2022 candidate filings appear on a screen on Tuesday, March 8 at the Oregon State Capitol in Salem. ABIGAIL DOLLINS / STATESMAN JOURNAL



Sen. Sara Gelser, D-Linn County, listens during a June Senate legislative hearing. BRIAN HAYES / STATESMAN JOURNAL

## ‘Egregious violation’

### Parents demand equal education time for students with disabilities

**Eddy Binford-Ross**

Salem Statesman Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

A blind student is given 20 minutes of online instruction each day, while his peers receive more than five hours of in-person class daily.

A kindergartener with autism is told he can only attend half days, forcing his parent to quit her job to support his education.

A medically fragile student is told there's no staff to support them and ends up missing 40 days of school.

In districts across Oregon, families of students with disabilities say they are being denied equal access to public education. These families say their children's non-disabled peers are in school full time, while their kids have their hours and days cut.

Shortening school days is almost always illegal under state and federal disability laws, but that hasn't stopped it from happening to students with disabilities across the state. And when it does happen, the process to get full school days reinstated can take years, or it might never happen.

Oregon families, government officials and disability

rights organizations are fighting to ensure students with disabilities receive the public education the law affords them. They're proposing changes to state law so that enforcing these protections is easier, working to turn public attention to the issue and bringing legal challenges against local and state education organizations.

“Special education is not a favor. Special education is a right,” Sen. Sara Gelser Blouin, D-Corvallis, said.

#### Legislating change

The issue isn't the laws — the actions described above are already illegal. The problem is enforcement, Gelser Blouin said.

In 2017, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 263, which limited the circumstances in which students could be placed on a shortened day.

State law allows students to be placed on an abbreviated schedule only if it's required for the student's needs and a specific set of steps has been followed. The parents must be allowed to participate in the decision-making process. There must be proof that the student's Individualized Education Program

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## Environment bills address wine in cans, earthquake safety, more

### Here are the environment bills the Legislature passed

**Tracy Loew**

Salem Statesman Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

Wine in cans will be included in the state's Bottle Bill recycling program, under a bill passed during the final days of Oregon's 2022 Legislative Session.

Beginning July 1, 2025, wine in cans will carry a 10-cent deposit and refund like other beverages.

Senate Bill 1520 also addresses low redemption rates by requiring large non-participating beverage distributors in certain parts of the state to either provide redemption services, join the Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative or pay a fee to support redemption.

And it directs the Oregon Liquor Control Commission to develop signs to be posted in all groceries and markets to make redemption opportunities more understandable for consumers.

The Bottle Bill update was among a number of environmental bills considered during the 2022 short legislative session.

#### Here's what passed

**Tank farm safety:** More than 600 fuel tanks sit along the Willamette River in Portland, on unstable soil. In the event of a Cascadia subduction zone earthquake, many of those tanks would spill onto the ground, slide into the river or explode.

Senate Bill 1567 requires those fuel terminal owners to conduct seismic vulnerability assessments, and submit them to the Department of Environmental Quality by June 1, 2024. The owners then must implement seismic risk mitigation plans approved by the department.

And the bill requires the Oregon Department of Energy to develop an energy security plan by June 1, 2024.

“We're taking critical action to prepare for disaster. It's only a matter of time,” said Sen. Michael Dem-brow, D-Portland, who carried the bill.

**Zoonotic disease prevention:** Live-animal markets are banned in Oregon under House Bill 3128, in an effort to slow the spread of disease from animals to humans. Zoonotic diseases are on the rise worldwide, driven by habitat loss, climate change and wildlife exploitation.

The bill also strengthens state agency coordination, and requires the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to review and update its list of prohibited wildlife species.

“It's so exciting to see Oregon leading efforts to prevent future public health crises by tackling wildlife exploitation head on,” said Quinn Read, Oregon policy director at the Center for Biological Diversity.

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## Better late than never?

### Oregon to soon offer optional digital vaccine card

**Tatiana Parafiniuk-Talesnick**

Salem Statesman Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

Oregonians toting around their physical COVID-19 vaccine cards to get into the restaurants and venues that require proof of immunization will soon have a digital option.

After first making headlines in the fall, the Oregon

Health Authority is set to debut the app in late March. The app, which lets a user upload their vaccination information to get a scannable code, will be free to anyone in the state who wants to use it.

People will be able to access the tool, which uses SMART Health Card technology, on both computers and mobile devices. OHA is conducting a web content accessibility review to ensure the app works for users needing assistive technology, a spokesperson said Friday. The app will be available in English,

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Blue skies light up the Capitol's Gold Man and Oregon flag. STATESMAN JOURNAL FILE

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Vol. 141, No. 13

Serving the Silverton Area Since 1880  
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