

Salem Report

By Representative Brad Witt



I was recently in Salem for the regularly scheduled Legislative Days, and for the Special Session called by Governor Brown. The Special Session was called specifically to address an inequity in Oregon's tax statutes following our disconnect from the federal tax structure. We passed legislation that will allow about 12,000 sole proprietors to be eligible for the same adjustments as other small business entities in Oregon. These are small business owners who contribute to our communities in myriad ways, especially in rural areas. Although we still need to have a serious discussion about our revenue system as a whole, I felt it was important to support the Governor's quest for tax fairness.

My **House Interim Committee on Transportation Policy** gathered to hear some very important information regarding major transportation projects and the management of traffic congestion in the Portland Metro area. Statistics gathered between 2013-2015 showed that traffic delays had increased 23%, and it has only gotten worse. HB 2017, the transportation package that passed last session, called for the Department of Transportation to look at "congestion pricing," as a means of managing traffic, better known as tolling. The Transportation Commission is still weighing whether or not to do this, which method to employ, and where the greatest benefit will be realized. As this will certainly affect my constituents, I will keep you posted!

Other committees are delving into equally interesting topics. Legislators heard about everything from the state of our public defender system to the construction standards for "tiny homes." Much of this testimony is constituent driven, when citizens like yourselves bring issues to us to be studied and hopefully resolved. It doesn't always mean a new law. Sometimes it just means doing things differently.

Outside the building, you might be interested in knowing that the Joint Committee on Student Success is touring the state examining the best practices employed in Oregon's most successful schools. At each of its first five stops, members of the committee have heard students describe the need for more teachers, more mental health counselors, better in-school

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Food Bank News

May 12, 2018 was a successful day for Vernonia Cares Food Bank. Offering two raffle baskets as a fundraiser during the plant sale yielded over \$150 for the food bank. Successful raffle basket winners were Henry Langmaid (bottom left) and Anna Salt.

While the raffle sale was operating, Peter O'Leary (right), representing the National Letter Carriers, picked up 388 pounds of food for our local food bank. Great work, Peter!



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