

BILLS IN 2017 LEGISLATURE AIM TO PROTECT CIVIL RIGHTS AND HEALTH CARE

Barely two weeks after President-elect Donald Trump is sworn in, Oregon's regular legislative session will begin Feb. 1.

Multiple bills being drafted aim to address civil rights, human rights and health care. And while some bills are also being designed to protect existing state laws, others are being proposed to fill in the gaps in federal laws and protections that could be affected by the Trump administration.

Several Oregon elected officials and members of human rights advocacy groups echo the urgency of legislation protecting civil rights, from those of the children of immigrants to the rights of the LGBTQ community.

Diane Goodwin is the communications director for Basic Rights Oregon (BRO), a public policy advocacy group for LGBTQ Oregonians, and she says that while "Oregon has been on the forefront of LGBTQ equality nationally for many years ... many barriers still exist for transgender Oregonians."

One bill the group is working on would provide equal health care benefits to people regardless of gender identity. "Basically with this bill, we know that a lot of transgender people still face health care discrimination in Oregon," Goodwin says. "We have gender identity included within the Oregon Health Plan, although it's not comprehensive, we've made a lot of progress on it."

BRO is also drafting a legislative concept which would simplify the process for transgender people applying to obtain new identity documents like birth certificates, and they hope to find multiple sponsors in the upcoming session. "So a lot of trans folks when they transition need to update their name and gender markers, and right now the process is really hard to navigate, it's intrusive and it's costly," Goodwin says.

Andrea Williams with immigrant rights group Causa says there are a number of inspiring bills coming up in the 2017 Legislature. "[We'll see] things like health care for all kids, to cover immigrant children under the Oregon health care plan; a bill to end profiling and to address the affordable housing situation." She adds, "We have an opportunity to be different as a state."

Sen. Floyd Prozanski, [D] District 4, is working on a bill regarding grand jury recordation. He says Oregon is one of two states — Louisiana is the other — which does not record grand jury proceedings.

Issues can arise under the current state law because "one of the grand jurors is appointed by the other grand jurors to take notes of the testimony that is given before the grand jury," Prozanski says. Recordation would ensure testimonies are not misinterpreted or the person on trial doesn't tell a story different from what is written down, according to Prozanski.

"And as you can imagine whoever that individual is they could be more attentive than another person, they could also have their own filters as to what they think is important as to what they might jot down as to what they heard them say, but the way they write it may not be exactly how it was said." He adds, "So it makes a lot of sense to me, and many others, that we should go ahead and have those proceedings recorded."

Prozanski, who is a prosecutor in addition to a legislator, says he is supporting another bill that falls under the civil rights scope by making discovery — information required to be shared by both parties in court cases — costs more affordable. "I know that the defense bar has been concerned with some of the cost for discovery and it varies from county to county so there's a bill that may have some uniformity in what can be charged," he says.

Prozanski supports the state prohibition on using local law enforcement to enforce federal immigration laws and cites attacks on it as an area of concern.

He says, "I've heard at least two House members who were looking at trying to overturn that or repeal that prohibition." He adds, "So that will come through judiciary, and I will be pretty zealous in ensuring that we maintain what we have now because our local law enforcement resources are so limited and they really need to be focused on what the community needs to be doing and not be at the charge and direction of the federal government."

Newly appointed state Sen. James Manning just made a trip to Salem and says he is waiting to find out which committees he'll be appointed to. He says he's keeping an eye on health care for all and will be paying close attention to how veterans are impacted. "We still have a significant number of our population that are not currently receiving healthcare," Manning says. "Children and women in particular, I'm really concerned about that — in particular our rural areas to make sure we are doing the proper outreach to provide them with the resources that they need." ■

ACTIVIST ALERT

- At 7 pm Wednesday, Dec. 28, there will be a public meeting regarding **The Future of Tsunami Books**. The lease for Tsunami Books is up June 30, 2017, Scott Landfield of Tsunami says. Will it continue at its present location, will it be moved, or will it dissolve? The facts will be presented, followed by a facilitated question and answer, and discussion period. An as-yet unscheduled second meeting by invite will be held to deal with specific financial issues. Email tsunami1@opusnet.com with questions or comments.

- In case you missed it on EW's Facebook page, check out **the recording by Eagle Park Slim on the theme of "Give"** on our blog and go online and peruse our "Give Guide" as you ponder ways to fight Donald Trump's agenda. You will also find the last two Christmas songs recorded by Slim, "Every Day" and "Young Mary," both backed by Paul Biondi on saxophone. You can volunteer your time, material items or make tax-deductible donations to a plethora of amazing organizations. Did we miss any? Tell us about it in a letter to the editor sent to letters@eugeneweekly.com.

- **Egan Warming Centers** have activated eight nights so far this month, and more cold weather is possible for the holidays so more volunteers are needed to staff this vital shelter option for the unhoused. Egan has scheduled one more new volunteer orientation this month at 6:30 pm Thursday, Dec. 22, at the First Christian Church 1166 Oak Street, in the chapel. Note that the parking lot across the alley behind the church is a pay-to-park lot seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

POLLUTION UPDATE

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) fined Eugene-based **Apex Machinery, Inc.** \$6,095 on Dec. 14 for Clean Water Act violations at its facility located at 100 Polk Street. DEQ fined Apex for failure to monitor for pH, oil & grease, suspended solids, copper, lead and zinc. DEQ noted that "the system that protects water quality in Oregon is highly dependent on permit registrants complying with the monitoring requirements of their permits," and that failure to comply with these requirements is "considered to be among the most serious of violations."

Doug Quirke/Oregon Clean Water Action Project



HAPPENING PEOPLE

BY PAUL NEEVEL

VIA FILIPE

"As a kid, I did drama, music and dance," says Via Filipe, who grew up in Salt Lake City. "At first, my mom didn't allow sports." But her mother later relented, and in high school Filipe excelled at volleyball, basketball and track. She won a volleyball scholarship to the University of South Alabama in Mobile, and also played for the USA Junior National Team in Europe and for a pro team in South America. "I fell in love with coaching," says Filipe, who left school after her senior year in 2006, a few credits shy of a degree in electrical engineering, to coach a team in an inner-city sports program in Mobile. Then she got married and had a daughter, Jaryah, a son, Jamaize, and a second daughter, Jenovae, before the family moved to Eugene in 2010. Filipe now has a second son, Lona, 21 months of age, while she also went through a divorce early in 2016. "I gained weight with the kids," she says of her first three children, so she became certified as a personal trainer and opened an exercise gym, GNG Fitness, in 2013. "I wanted to create a training environment that was comfortable and motivating." In 2015, she and a partner, Leon Ireland, started a nonprofit, Athletes United, to provide coaching and competition to talented young athletes. They raised funds and last month brought a Jr. Pee Wee team (ages 8-11) from the Willamette Valley to the National Youth Football Tournament in Las Vegas, where she was the first-ever female coach. In the photo, she shows off the second-place trophy they won. Learn more about GNG Fitness and Athletes United on their Facebook pages.