

REP. TERESA ALONSO LEÓN SPONSORED

A SUCCESSFUL BILL TO REQUIRE

CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAINING AT

PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES, AND REP. DIEGO

HERNANDEZ SPONSORED ANOTHER

TO REQUIRE ETHNIC STUDIES AS PART

OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN KINDERGARTEN

THROUGH 12TH GRADE.



equal pay bill in the nation. It will allow women to set their own pay expectations when seeking a new job and grant immediate access to the courts when women suspect they're underpaid compared with their male counterparts. The law incentivizes employers to conduct regular pay studies and correct any inequities in order to earn safe harbor in any subsequent lawsuit.

The Reproductive Health Equity Act is loaded with leading-edge protections for women.

The new law is the first in the nation to enumerate in statute the entire list of preventive health services (including postpartum care) for women without cost sharing, Dempsey of NARAL says. The bill was first to establish state-funded abortion for women excluded from Medicaid based on citizenship status.

And, while Oregon is the eighth state to codify abortions in state law, the state was the first ever to require the procedure to be covered by insurance companies free of charge. The law also guarantees equitable care for transgender patients.

The new law means about 66,000 Oregon women who had no access to free contraception and/or abortion because of various legal exclusions will now get no-cost services, according to the Pro-Choice Coalition of Oregon, which championed the bill.

"It's huge. It's enormous," says former Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy, a longtime advocate for women's health. "It stands there as a light where everything is getting dimmer. It's amazing what they've been able to get done."

Measure 101

Oregon lawmakers are sailing into next week's 35-day short session with a new progressive measure in their sights: a carbon emissions cap-and-trade bill meant to animate Gov. Kate Brown's promise to uphold the Paris Climate Agreement — even as the Trump Administration withdraws from the Paris agreement and rejects the Obama-era Clean Power Plan.

Such an Oregon measure would solidify the so-called "blue wall" of Democratic solidarity among Washington, Oregon and California and against regressive Trump Administration policies.

"If the states don't step up and honor the Paris Accords, then we're doing nothing. We can't wait around for the federal government to get this done for us," said Rep. Ken Helm, D-Beaverton, who is spearheading the legislation in the Oregon House. "We can do this."

Some lawmakers see sweeping progressive possibilities in this left-coast stronghold. Besides forming a multi-state carbon market, Manning dreams of the three West Coast states (plus Hawaii and Alaska) forming their own single-payer health system, he said. The combined economic clout would be unstoppable.

Instead, rain may fall on Oregon progressive's parade in the form of a broken state budget and maybe an electoral backlash come November.

Republican lawmakers relished their ability to get Measure 101 on the ballot to try to put a stop to the Medicaid expansion, but they didn't get far.

In the Jan. 23 election, progressive voters turned down the Republicans' meddling and reaffirmed the state's version of Obamacare by a 62-to-38 percent margin statewide. Lane County was even more enthusiastic with a 67-to-33 percent "yes" vote.

The Multnomah County vote was the definition of lopsided at 80-to-20, but the surprises were narrow wins in counties that often align with the rural conservative parts

and a lesser stigma — down from felonies carrying five- to 10-year sentences with life-long shunning to follow. The Legislature also put \$7 million toward drug treatment.

OREGON PRESERVES OBAMACARE (HOUSE BILL 2391) JUNE 21

Going into the 2017 session, the Legislature was roughly \$300 million short of state dollars needed to preserve the Medicaid expansion that had extended coverage to more than 350,000 Oregonians under the federal Affordable Care Act. Without the \$300 million, the state stood to lose up to \$1 billion in federal matching funds. Without a fix, hundred of thousands would lose coverage.

After months of closed-door negotiations, lawmakers, insurance company reps and hospital leaders agreed to raise the money for 2017-2019 with a 1.5 percent tax on insurers and a 0.7 percent tax increase on the state's larger hospitals. In an additional move to

stabilize the private insurance marketplace, the bill created a reinsurance pool that insurance companies could tap if they experienced a run of expensive cases.

Despite the 2017 Legislature's approval and widespread support in the healthcare industry, three Republican lawmakers launched a referendum to repeal important parts of the bill. Oregon voters, however, sided with the Legislature, kept the fix and preserved coverage for hundreds of thousands of Oregonians.

COVER ALL KIDS (SENATE BILL 558) JULY 7

The bill extended the Oregon Health Plan to 17,600 children from low-income families who are in Oregon without documents. They are among the last 3.5 percent of Oregon kids under 18 years that were left out of the state/federal Medicaid system. The bill changes qualification for children from being "lawfully present" to "residing in the state." Lawmakers allocated \$36 million to pay for the

care because federal money can't be used except for children who can prove their citizenship.

SANCTUARY (HOUSE BILL 3464) JULY 6

For three decades, Oregon has been the only state in the nation with a sanctuary policy that prohibits local law enforcement from detaining people based strictly on their immigration status. The 2017 bill fortifies the law by explicitly allowing state agencies and local governments — schools, public health, courts — to withhold non-public information about people who are not accused of crimes from immigration enforcement agents.

HOMELESS SPENDING (HOUSE BILL 5012) JULY 5

The 2017 Legislature quadrupled its spending on emergency housing and homeless assistance in order to put some muscle behind the "housing first" movement, which holds that it's nearly impossible to get off drugs

or find a job or preserve health when a body is on the streets.

Lane County is spending its \$3.85 million allocation on overnight warming (including Egan Warming Center), safe parking, seasonal motel vouchers, rent assistance, housing counseling and other services. In addition, Gov. Kate Brown is asking the Legislature for \$5 million more. Lane County is vying for a \$546,000 share to help 120 families per year, including at the Family Emergency Shelter, at a recently donated south Eugene church.

ETHNIC STUDIES (HOUSE BILL 2845) JULY 19

This new law requires kindergarten through 12-grade public schools to teach ethnic studies as part of the social studies curriculum. An advisory group writes the standards after examining where social studies courses fall short in recognizing "the histories, contributions and perspectives of ethnic minorities and social

minorities," according to the new law.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY (HOUSE BILL 2864) JUNE 5

This law requires public colleges and universities to establish and enforce cultural competency standards by way of institution-wide goals, training for faculty and staff, and biennial reporting to each institution's board.

Cultural competency "means an understanding of how institutions and individuals can respond respectfully and effectively to people from all cultures, economic statuses, language backgrounds, races, ethnic backgrounds, disabilities, religions, genders, gender identifications, sexual orientations, veteran statuses and other characteristics in a manner that recognizes, affirms and values the worth, and preserves the dignity, of individuals, families and communities," according to the new law.