

Homeless: Rural communities have been hit hard

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The Oregon Department of Education report blames a lack of affordable housing statewide for the increasing number of homeless children.

Local figures

In Clatsop County last school year, 287 students were reported as homeless, up from about 235 the year prior. The designation includes students without a permanent home, doubling up with friends and family because of economic hardship, or staying in shelters or commercial lodging. The state tracks unsheltered students staying in cars, trailers, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus stations and other areas not equipped for sleeping.

Warrenton-Hammond School District reported 130 students considered homeless, nearly 13 percent of the district's enrollment and up from 117 homeless students the year prior. Two-thirds were

Student homelessness in Clatsop County

(Statistics by school district, 2015-16)

Circumstance	Astoria	Seaside	Warrenton-Hammond	Knappa	Jewell
Unaccompanied minors	19	<5	—	<5	—
Sheltered	7	<5	—	—	—
Doubled up	69	37	98	<5	—
Unsheltered	8	<5	32	<5	—
Hotel/motel	8	20	—	—	—
Total	92	59	130	6	0
Percent of enrollment	4.9%	3.8	13	1.3	—
Percent change from 2014-15	43.8%	28.3	11.1	-25	—

NOTE: Amounts of five or fewer students are redacted for student privacy.

Sources: Oregon Dept. of Education; Warrenton-Hammond School District

Edward Stratton and Alan Kenaga/EO Media Group

doubling up, with the rest unsheltered.

Astoria reported 89 students homeless, nearly 5 percent of enrollment and up more than 1 percent from the year prior. Nineteen of those were unaccompanied minors, by far the county's largest share.

Seaside reported 59 students — or 3.8 percent of enrollment — homeless, with 20 students living in hotels

and motels, the county's largest share.

Knappa reported six homeless students, down from eight the year prior. Jewell reported none, after having five or fewer the year prior.

Eviction

Reacting to the report, the Stable Homes for Oregon Families Coalition urged the Legislature to protect tenants at risk of losing their homes

because of eviction and severe rent increases.

The number of homeless students increased by more than 1,100 from the previous year, the new report said.

Lincoln County Commissioner Bill Hall said rural communities have been hit hard, with nearly 1-in-7 students experiencing homelessness for part of the 2015-16 school year in his county.

"Our children should be

'Our children should be thinking about their homework and playtime, and not worrying about where they will sleep at night.'

Bill Hall

Lincoln County commissioner

thinking about their homework and playtime, and not worrying about where they will sleep at night," Hall said on Facebook. "We can do more to protect kids and families from experiencing homelessness in Oregon."

State law allows landlords to evict families at any time without stating a reason and prohibits local governments from enacting rent stabilization measures, the Stable Homes for Oregon Families Coalition said. The United States Conference of Mayors has identified eviction as a leading cause of homelessness, especially for families with children, the coalition said.

The instability that home-

lessness causes often leads to school absences and falling behind, Marti Heard, homeless program liaison for Portland Public Schools, was quoted as saying by the coalition. That can jeopardize future college or career success, Heard said.

In some districts, 20 percent or more of their students count as homeless by the federal definition, the education department said. Unemployment and a lack of family-wage jobs and affordable housing in rural areas have contributed to the rise, it said.

Edward Stratton of The Daily Astorian contributed to this story.



AP Photo/Mike Groll

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo speaks during a rally to raise the minimum wage in Albany, N.Y., in February. A federal court today blocked implementation of a rule imposed by President Barack Obama's administration that would have made an estimated 4 million more higher-earning workers across the country eligible for overtime pay starting Dec. 1.

Overtime: Department of Labor could appeal the Tuesday ruling

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"Businesses and state and local governments across the country can breathe a sigh of relief now that this rule has been halted," said Nevada Attorney General Adam Laxalt, who led the coalition of 21 states and governors fighting the rule and has been a frequent critic of what he characterized as Obama administration overreach. "Today's preliminary injunction reinforces the importance of the rule of law and constitutional government."

Skip OT pay

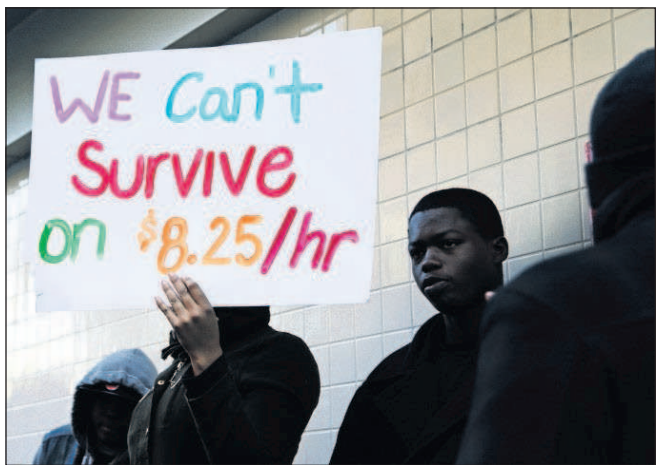
The regulation sought to shrink the so-called "white collar exemption" that allows employers to skip overtime pay for salaried administrative or professional workers who make more than about \$23,660 per year. Critics say it's wrong that some retail and restaurant chains pay low-level managers as little as \$25,000 a year and no overtime — even if they work 60 hours a week.

Under the rule, those workers would have been eligible for overtime pay as long as they made less than about \$47,500 a year, and the threshold would readjust every three years to reflect changes in average wages.

The Department of Labor said the changes would restore teeth to the Fair Labor Standards Act, which it called "the crown jewel of worker protections in the United States." Inflation weakened the act: overtime protections applied to 62 percent of U.S. full-time salaried workers in 1975 but just 7 percent today.

The agency said it's now considering all its legal options.

"We strongly disagree with the decision by the court, which has the effect of delaying a fair day's pay for a long day's work for millions of hardworking Americans," the labor department said in a statement. "The department's overtime rule is the result of a comprehensive, inclusive rulemaking process, and we remain confident in the legality of all aspects of the rule."



AP Photo/Ben Margot

Protesters demonstrate outside a McDonald's restaurant in Oakland, Calif. A federal court today blocked implementation of a rule imposed by President Barack Obama's administration that would have made an estimated 4 million more higher-earning workers across the country eligible for overtime pay starting Dec. 1.

'This overtime rule is totally disconnected from reality'

Karen Kerrigan
president and CEO of the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council

Up with the times

The ruling dealt a major blow to the Obama administration's effort to beef up labor laws it said weren't keeping pace with the times.

Opponents fought hard against the rule, saying it would increase compliance costs for employers who would have to track hours more meticulously and would force companies to cut employees' base pay to compensate for overtime costs that kick in more frequently.

"This overtime rule is totally disconnected from reality," said Karen Kerrigan, president and CEO of the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council. "The one-size-fits-all doubling of the salary threshold demonstrated ignorance regarding the vast differences in the cost-of-living across America."

The court agreed with plaintiffs that the rule could cause

irreparable harm if it wasn't stopped before it was scheduled to take effect next week.

The Department of Labor could appeal the Tuesday ruling, which might end up at a Supreme Court that includes some Trump appointees.

But the injunction takes political pressure off the incoming administration at an opportune time, according to labor law professor Ruben Garcia of UNLV's Boyd School of Law. With no new overtime changes kicking in Dec. 1, Trump can accept the status quo and won't have to risk angering workers by walking back overtime benefits shortly after employees start receiving them.

His administration could choose to make its own rule changes through the lengthy administrative process. Or Congress could amend labor laws.

The impending rule wasn't front and center in the presidential campaign, but Trump did tell the news site Circa in August that he would love to see a delay or carve-out for small businesses in the overtime regulation. Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan was more vocal against it, saying it would be an "absolute disaster" for the economy and was being rushed through by Obama to boost his political legacy.

Parade: Community thanked for 'amazing amount of support'

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'Our voters have expressed how highly they value our young citizens.'

Sheila Roley

Seaside School District superintendent

"Each school will be sending out an invitation to their students in this week's newsletter," Seaside School District Superintendent Sheila Roley said Friday. "It is a wonderful honor for our students to be invited to be the grand marshals of the Parade of Lights."

Roley thanked the community for their "amazing amount of support for our students."

"With the passage of the school construction bond, our voters have expressed how highly they value our young citizens," she said. "We are so grateful."

Local Pacific Power employees and their families

will participate in the parade this year, Pacific Power's Regional Business Manager Alisa Dunlap said. "We will be decorating a bucket truck for the festivities. And look forward to handing out our signature glow sticks along the parade route."

The parade formation begins at 6 p.m. at First Avenue on Necanicum Drive with participants facing south. The parade ends at the Downing and Broadway

pocket park. Noncommercial winners receive a \$50 check and commercial winners receive a plaque. Following the parade, participants are invited to join tree-lighting, caroling and visits with Santa Claus.

Dunlap has an additional advisory this holiday season: For home lighting, make sure you are using an appropriate outlet and check decorations for damage prior to plugging them in.



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