

# Budget: A list of 'principles' released to guide decisions

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## Johnson involved

The legislators are: Sen. Jackie Winters, R-Salem; Rep. Greg Smith, R-Hepburn; Rep. Nancy Nathanson, D-Eugene; and Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose.

Those ideas include issuing bonds only for larger projects so as to cut debt costs, and increasing current and future employees' share of retirement costs.

"These are sort of the core of what we think it would take to start to do some of the things to bend the cost curve over the long term," Devlin said, noting the list was not exhaustive or all-inclusive.

The group also proposed two immediate steps to take to address the upcoming two-year budget — freeze hiring of "nonessential" state positions and stop automatically granting inflationary increases for services and supplies.

Legislators also released a list of "principles" to guide budget decisions, such as requiring analysis of program costs on an ongoing basis rather than just their initial costs; and not creating programs or funds without money to pay for them.

Many of the proposed long-term proposals address costs associated with state employees such as pensions and health care costs, resulting in pushback from union groups.

## Union concern

Service Employees International Union 503 President Steve Demarest said in a statement that the cost-containment measures presented an "effort to scapegoat people who have dedicated their lives to public service" and called for changes to state business taxes — another source of contention this legislative session. Another group of lawmakers is evaluating possible adjustments to the state's revenue system.

"We're doing this not because we think that this is solely an issue for public employees," Devlin said. "Obviously I do believe that public employees should be compensated justly."

House Minority Leader Mike McLane, R-Powell Butte, said after the proposals were announced Friday that the ideas represented a "starting point."

"While House Republicans have questions about the implementation and durability

of these ideas, they nonetheless represent an encouraging starting point in a broader conversation," McLane said in a statement. "The bottom line is Oregon's state government must have structural spending reform to meet our commitments in the long term."

Patrick Criteser, chair of the Oregon Business Plan — a coalition of business leaders and a prominent voice weighing in on state public finance — said the ideas proposed Friday were an indication legislators are "looking seriously" at ways to address the state's budget for the long haul.

"We know addressing these costs will not be easy," Criteser said in a prepared

statement, "and this memorandum shows that legislators are prepared to have hard conversations about the state's structural spending issues, including the need to rein in the costs of the public sector healthcare benefits and making sure that the public pension system is secure for all employees."

While it's been known since January how much may need to be trimmed from areas of the budget more generally, a list of proposed cuts to specific programs released last week has highlighted the possible effects of budget reductions on education and services for people with disabilities and the elderly.

## Hiring freeze

On Thursday, Gov. Kate Brown announced a state government hiring freeze on each agency until its budget is approved by the Legislature. That could leave higher starting balances for the upcoming biennium, which begins in July. Her proposal differs from what legislators have suggested — a hiring freeze for nonessential employees for the next two years of the budget.

On Friday, a separate work group on public safety spending also presented proposals focused on measures to restrain growth of the state's prison population. Early estimates from the Legislative Fiscal Office indicate the state could save at least \$19.7 million of general fund money in the upcoming budget cycle by making certain changes, such as extending the duration of a program that allows certain prisoners to be released early in favor of community-based supervision.

*The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.*



Betsy Johnson

## WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

### As budget deadline looms, Trump pushes border wall funding

WASHINGTON— With a budget deadline looming, President Donald Trump plans a whirlwind of activities seeking to highlight accomplishments while putting fresh pressure on congressional Democrats to pay for a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border, even if that pressure risks a possible government shutdown.

Trump approaches the symbolic 100-day mark for his administration this coming week juggling a renewed health care push and his demands that a must-pass government funding bill should include money for the wall.

In a tweet Sunday, Trump jabbed at Democrats, who vigorously oppose wall funding. "The Democrats don't want money from budget going to border wall despite the fact that it will stop drugs and very bad MS 13 gang members."

He added: "Eventually, but at a later date so we can get started early, Mexico will be paying, in some form, for the badly needed border wall."

The 100-day mark falls on Saturday, the same day government could shut down without a budget deal. Trump has announced a rally in Pennsylvania that day.

### French vote for Macron, Le Pen shuts out mainstream politics

PARIS — French voters shut out the country's political mainstream from the presidency for the first time in the country's modern history, and today found themselves being courted across the spectrum for the runoff election.

The May 7 runoff will be between the populist Marine Le Pen and centrist Emmanuel Macron, and French politicians on the moderate left and right immediately urged voters to block Le Pen's path to power.

The defeated far-left candidate, Jean-Luc Melenchon, pointedly refused to do the same, and Le Pen's National Front is hoping to do the once unthinkable and peel away voters historically opposed to a party long tainted by racism and anti-Semitism.

"The voters who voted for Mr. Melenchon are angry voters. They can be in agreement with us," said Steeve Brios, a vice president of Le Pen's National Front party. He said they express a choice "outside the system."

Choosing inside the system is no longer an option for French voters, who rejected the two mainstream parties that have alternated power for decades in favor of Le Pen and the untested Macron, who has never held elected office and who founded his own political movement just last year. Turnout was 78 percent.

### South Korea, allies brace for North Korea follow-up act

SEOUL, South Korea— North Korea marks the founding anniversary of its military on Tuesday, and South Korea and its allies are bracing for the possibility that it could conduct another nuclear test or launch an intercontinental ballistic missile for the first time.

North Korea often marks significant dates by displaying its military capability. It so far has carried out five nuclear tests.

Such a move could test the developing North Korea policies of U.S. President Donald Trump, who has reportedly settled on a strategy that emphasizes increased pressure on North Korea with the help of China, the North's only major ally, instead of military options or trying to overthrow North Korea's government.

Trump spoke by phone with both the Japanese and Chinese leaders today. Chinese state broadcaster CCTV quoted President Xi Jinping as telling Trump that China strongly opposes North Korea's nuclear weapons program and hopes "all parties will exercise restraint and avoid aggravating the situation."

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Trump agreed to urge North Korea to refrain from what Abe called provocative actions. "The North Korean nuclear and missile problem is an extremely serious security threat to not only the international community but also our country," the Japanese leader told reporters in Tokyo afterward.

### US Defense Sec'y Mattis in Afghanistan to discuss war needs

KABUL, Afghanistan— U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis arrived unannounced in Afghanistan today to assess America's longest war as the Trump administration weighs sending more troops.

Kabul was the final stop on a six-nation, weeklong tour Mattis said was intended to bolster relations with allies and partners and to get an update on the stalemated conflict in Afghanistan. He is the first member of President Donald Trump's Cabinet to visit Afghanistan.



AP Photo/Gerald Herbert

Workers dismantle the Liberty Place monument today, which commemorates whites who tried to topple a biracial post-Civil War government, in New Orleans. It was removed overnight in an attempt to avoid disruption from supporters who want the monuments to stay.

Gen. John Nicholson, the top American commander in Kabul, recently told Congress that he needs a few thousand more troops to keep Afghan security forces on track to eventually handling the Taliban insurgency on their own.

As part of the administration's review of Afghan policy, Trump's national security adviser, Army Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster, visited Kabul last week to consult with Nicholson and with Afghan officials.

McMaster said in a TV interview after returning to Washington that the U.S. in recent years has scaled back its military effort against the Taliban. "Our enemy sensed that and they have redoubled their efforts, and it's time for us, alongside our Afghan partners, to respond," he said.

### APNewsBreak: New Orleans to take down Confederate statues

Workers in New Orleans began removing the first of four prominent Confederate monuments early today, the latest Southern institution to sever itself from symbols viewed by many as a representation of racism and white supremacy.

Trucks arrived to begin removing the first memorial, one that commemorates whites who tried to topple a biracial post-Civil War government in New Orleans, around 1:25 a.m. in an attempt to avoid disruption from supporters who want the monuments to stay, some of whom city officials said have made death threats.

Workers who were inspecting the statue ahead of its removal could be seen wearing flak jackets and helmets. Police officers watched the area from atop the parking garage of a nearby hotel.

Three other statues to Confederate Generals Robert E. Lee and P.G.T. Beauregard and Confederate States of America President Jefferson Davis will be removed in later days now that legal challenges have been overcome.

"There's a better way to use the property these monuments are on and a way that better reflects who we are," New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu said in an interview Sunday with The Associated Press.

### Jewish war veterans bemoan stalling of Israel's WWII museum

LATRUN, Israel— Two years after Israel's prime minister vowed to complete the establishment of a museum honoring Jewish World War II veterans, funds have dried up and an abandoned construction site is all that remains of the grand project.

The story of the 1.5 million Jews who fought the Nazis — and the 250,000 who died in battle — has long been lost in Israel amid the larger tragedy of the Holocaust and the Nazi genocide of Europe's Jews. The museum aims to rectify that oversight, but the remaining warriors, thought to number no more than 5,000, worry they won't live long enough to see it materialize and accuse the government of stalling because of petty political considerations.

"The picture is not complete if we don't understand that together with the 6 million victims, the Jewish people also had a decisive role in defeating the Nazis," said Yitzhak Arad, a 90-year-old former Soviet partisan fighter who blew up 16 German supply trains as a teenager during the war. "I hope to see this museum before I leave this world and that is the wish of the fighters who are still alive."



Evening listings MONDAY

Table with columns for TV channels (A, L), time slots (6 PM, 6:30, 7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30), and program titles. Includes a date header for APRIL 24 and a sub-header for Charter Astoria/Seaside and Charter Long Beach.