

Tenant protections bill dies in state Senate

Attempt to deter mass evictions

By **PARIS ACHEN**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — A tenant protections bill — a chief priority for state House Speaker Tina Kotek and several other Portland-area lawmakers — has died in the Senate.

Sen. Lew Frederick, D-Portland, gave an emotional speech on the Senate floor Thursday, saying the failure of the bill was his “greatest disappointment” of the more than five-month session.

The legislation began in the House as an effort to try to deter mass evictions and retaliation and discrimination against tenants. The House narrowly passed the bill 31-27 in early April. The bill would have banned no-cause evictions and required landlords to pay relocation expenses to tenants when they ask a tenant to leave for certain allowable business or personal reasons.

Rep. Carla Piluso, D-Gresham, who volunteers as president of Human Solutions, a nonprofit organization that operates a family shelter in Gresham, has said the primary



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A Portland Tenants United filer distributed earlier in the 2017 legislative session. A tenant protections bill — a chief priority for House Speaker Tina Kotek and several other Portland-area lawmakers — has died in the Senate.

reason families come to the shelter is “they lost their home to no-cause eviction.”

The Senate Human Services Committee modified the bill to make it less punitive against landlords. The committee’s amendments reduced the circumstances under which landlords would have to pay relocation fees to tenants who were forced to leave at no fault of their own. The Senate also removed a provision to lift a ban on local rent control.

However, the proposal lacked support from any of the Senate’s 13 Republicans. Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend, for instance, has said restrictions on landlords are counterproductive to solving Oregon’s shortage of affordable rental units and has advocated for measures that make it easier for investors to develop new housing units.

“Oregon’s land use laws are the problem and if the speaker was serious about addressing the problem she would be attacking restrictive land use laws instead of renters and tenants,” said Jonathan Lockwood, spokesman for the Senate Republicans.

At least two key Democratic senators, Sens. Rod Monroe, D-Portland, and Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, also opposed the bill. Monroe, who is a landlord, has said outlawing no-cause evictions would be too restrictive to landlords who have problem tenants.

An effort by Senate Majority Leader Ginny Burdick, D-Portland, to negotiate a compromise more acceptable to landlords also failed to win the needed votes.

“I am sad we couldn’t reach agreement on a reasonable bill to limit no-cause evic-

tions. I commend the alliance of housing advocates for their hard work and I’m very disappointed we couldn’t get there,” Burdick said Thursday.

The compromise was included in an amendment to the bill by Senate Rules. Allison McIntosh, deputy director of policy for housing advocates Neighborhood Partnerships, said the compromise struck “a balance between protecting tenants and property rights.”

Monroe and Johnson faced backlash from some tenant advocates. Some advocates demonstrated at Monroe’s church in Portland. They also entered the Capitol before the building opened and left strongly-worded notes on the doors of lawmakers who opposed the bill. Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athens, said on the Senate floor earlier this week he was considering filing a trespass complaint with Oregon State Police.

“I’m sure it didn’t help to gain support for the bill by intimidating lawmakers and breaking into the Capitol building early in the morning and string up offices with caution tape to look like a crime scene. The gangster tactics used to push this bill were doing violence to the passage of the bill,” Lockwood said.

Oregon lawmakers OK state REAL ID

By **PARIS ACHEN**
Capital Bureau

tification cards, known as REAL ID.

SALEM — A bill to give Oregonians a voluntary path to upgrade their state-issued driver’s license or ID card to federal standards is headed to Gov. Kate Brown for a signature.

The state House of Representatives voted 56-1 to pass Senate Bill 374 Thursday. The Senate passed the bill 28-2 in June.

The upgraded identification will be necessary as soon as 2018 to board domestic commercial flights and enter any federal facility, including Bonneville Dam or a federal courthouse. Without compliant state-issued ID, travelers will instead have to use a passport or other federally approved form of ID.

The bill will keep the state’s “engines of travel and commerce going,” said state Rep. Mike Nearman, R-Independence.

The Oregon Legislature long resisted more stringent requirements by the federal government for state iden-

The state Legislature passed a law in 2009 that prohibits state officials from spending money to comply with the federal law unless the federal government reimburses the state for the cost. Lawmakers also had privacy concerns about some of the federal requirements. The state already has received three extensions for complying with the law. The last extension expires Oct. 10. State officials have said Oregon would be unlikely to receive another extension without passing the bill.

Under the bill, the earliest Oregonians will be able to obtain a REAL ID is July 1, 2020, Nearman said. Offering the service will cost the state about \$580,000, he said.



Legislature approves election dates for referrals

Republicans plan to fight provider tax

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The state Legislature Thursday approved election dates for two major pieces of legislation if they are referred to voters.

A \$5.3 billion transportation funding package passed Thursday and new taxes on health care providers to pay for Medicaid could get referred to voters next year.

Oregonians can petition to refer legislation to the bal-

lot. The referral typically gets voted on in the next general election, but the Legislature has the authority to hold special elections.

Three Republican lawmakers plan to file a petition to refer the so-called \$550 million “provider tax” to the ballot.

Democrats in the state House and Senate passed legislation Thursday to hold the possible referral election on that issue in January, rather than the November general election. The same elections bill says that if the transportation package gets referred, it will be voted on in the May primary election.

The transportation package, an effort more than two years in the making, raises \$5.3

billion over 10 years through increased gas taxes, registration and title fees and a flat tax on adult bicycles priced more than \$200.

Many Republicans have cried foul at the Democratic effort to hold a January election on the possible provider tax referral. State Sen. Alan Olsen, of Canby, was moved to remark on the Senate floor Thursday: “It’s like the Grinch stole the election.”

The state already assesses certain urban hospitals 5.3 percent of their net revenues to help pay for Medicaid. Hospitals receive most, if not all, of the amount back in the form of payments. Legislation passed this session creates a tax of .7 percent on those hospitals,

a new 4 percent assessment on rural hospitals, and taxes insurers.

Democrats have said that holding the election in January gives lawmakers time to find a backup plan to fund Medicaid in the short legislative session.

Hospitals, who initially supported the provider tax and could as such be an important ally of provider tax proponents in a ballot battle, say they have not decided whether they’ll advocate for the tax at the ballot, now that the Legislature appears likely to pass another piece of legislation affecting how much they get paid for certain services.



About the Relay For Life Movement

The American Cancer Society Relay For Life movement is the world’s largest fundraising event to end cancer, uniting four million people around the world to celebrate survivorship, remember lives lost, and fight back against this disease. Teams camp out and participate by taking turns walking around a track or path. Symbolizing the battle waged around the clock by those facing cancer, the event empowers communities and individuals to take a stand against the disease and take action by supporting the Society’s lifesaving mission.

Join us for the Relay For Life of Clatsop County!

Saturday, July 8th, 2017

Astoria High School Track

10:00 am - 12:00 am

Register your team today!

RelayForLife.org/ClatsopcountyOR

- Learn about American Cancer Society programs and services.
- Join others in fighting back against cancer!

For more information, contact:

nancy.hillis@cancer.org

361.676.6378



RelayForLife.org | 800.227.2345

Clatsop County Rental Owners Assoc. presents

How to Deal with Abandoned Property and Death of a Tenant

Monday
July 10th
6pm

Golden Star Restaurant
599 Bond Street

\$35 members
\$50 couples
\$50 non-members
(includes dinner)

THE FRIENDS OF ASTORIA
COLUMN WELCOME

City Council for the
Annual Board Presentation
and to honor Hal Snow for his
dedication to the Friends Board
and the Astoria Column



July 10th

6pm

At the Column

ALL ARE WELCOME

