

COMMITTEES: Smith will focus on budget-making side, Barreto on policy-making

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amendments and choose whether to table a measure or pass it on to the House or Senate floor for debate.

Smith was appointed by Speaker Tina Kotek to the House Revenue Committee, Joint Committee on Ways and Means (co-vice chair), Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on General Government (co-chair), Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction, Joint Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization, Joint Committee on Tax Credits and the Legislative Administration Committee.

"What Oregon needs now are problem-solvers dedicated to finding the center-ground where we can craft a budget that works for all Oregonians," Smith said in a statement. "A budget the business community can support, public employees can support, and a budget that supports Oregon families. Such a budget has been achieved in the past and can be done again."

The Joint Committee on Ways and Means and its subcommittees review all bills with revenue attached and facilitate adoption of the biennium's budget, meaning Smith's appointments will put him in the center of Oregon's budget conversations. The Subcommittee on General Government crafts the PERS agency's budget and the Subcommittee on Capital Construction determines large state capital investments in projects such as the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center and Blue Mountain Community College's Early Learning Center.

The Joint Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization, meanwhile, will help craft the major transportation package the legislature hopes to pass in 2017.

Barreto was appointed to the House Agricultural and Natural Resources Committee, the House Business and Labor Committee (vice chair), House Rules Committee and House Transportation Policy Committee.

While Smith's appointments will

"I concur with (business owners) the legislature has not been very friendly in the last couple of sessions to small business." — Sen. Bill Hansell

be focused on the budget-making side, Barreto's appointments will allow him to have a voice in policy-making.

"We have a lot of work to do!" Barreto wrote in announcing his appointments on his official Facebook page.

The Transportation Policy Committee will also figure into the legislature's transportation package discussion as the legislative body that reviews policy related to streets and roads, public transit and traffic safety.

Many of the legislature's most controversial bills pass through the House Rules Committee, which is chaired by the House majority leader. The committee is the legislature's last policy committee to close during the session and as such is used to make final amendments to bills near the end of the session.

The Agricultural and Natural

Resources Committee examines all of the bills related to those issues, while the Business and Labor Committee will look at policy-setting bills affecting businesses across the state.

On the Senate side, Hansell was appointed by Senate President Peter Courtney to the Senate Workforce Committee, Senate Special Committee on Conduct, Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Transportation and Economic Development Subcommittee and Legislative Administration Committee.

Hansell said he was honored to be chosen to serve on those committees and is glad he is back on the Ways and Means Committee, which looks at any bill with revenue attached and therefore influences where money is spent in the state.

"It's a very important committee," Hansell said.

It's the only committee that meets on Fridays, making it difficult for Hansell to make the 600 mile round trip to his district regularly, but with teleconferencing and encouraging constituents to call or email with any concerns he said he make everything work.

Most of the committees take hours of time per week, but Hansell said in his four years on the Special Committee on Conduct, which examines ethics violations filed against senators, has only met once.

Hansell said he is looking forward to serving for the first time on the Senate Workforce Committee, which looks at PERS-related bills and every Senate bill affecting businesses.

"I concur with (business owners) the legislature has not been very friendly in the last couple of sessions to small business, with the regulations put on them," he said. "...I'm confident we'll have a more balanced approach."

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TRUMP: Pentagon plans to spend \$108B over five years to improve nuclear force

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he wants the U.S. to take or say why he raised the issue Thursday.

Spokesman Jason Miller said the president-elect was referring to the threat of nuclear proliferation "particularly to and among terrorist organizations and unstable and rogue regimes." Miller said Trump sees modernizing the nation's deterrent capability "as a vital way to pursue peace through strength."

If Trump were to seek an expansion of the nuclear stockpiles, it would mark a sharp shift in U.S. national security policy. President Barack Obama has made nuclear non-proliferation a centerpiece of his agenda, calling in 2009 for the U.S. to lead efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons — a goal he acknowledged would not be accomplished quickly or easily.

Still, the U.S. has been moving forward on plans to upgrade its aging nuclear arsenal. Earlier this year, Defense Secretary Ashton Carter said the Pentagon planned to spend \$108 billion over the next five years to sustain and improve its nuclear force.

The U.S. and Russia hold the vast majority of the world's nuclear weapons. In 2010, the two countries signed the New START treaty capping the number of nuclear warheads and missile launchers each country can possess. The agreement is in effect until 2021 and can be extended for another five years.

Thomas Karako, senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said the last comprehensive review of the U.S. nuclear force — which was conducted during Obama's first term — occurred against the backdrop of efforts to reset relations between Washington and Moscow. The relationship has since deteriorated, with Obama and Putin clashing over Russia's provocations in Ukraine and support for Syrian President Bashar Assad.

"We need to candidly assess what the environment is and what the prospects are for Russian compliance with current treaties," Karako said.

Trump has repeatedly called for closer relations with Russia and has spoken favorably about Putin. Democrats have questioned his ties to the Kremlin, particularly after U.S. intelligence officials assessed that Russia had interfered in the U.S. election on Trump's behalf.

Putin addressed his country's nuclear capabilities during an annual year-end meeting of the Russian defense ministry. He said Russia should enhance missile complexes that can "penetrate existing and future missile defense systems."

A U.S.-backed missile shield in Eastern Europe has been another source of tension between Washington and Moscow. Russia argues the system is a threat, while

U.S. and NATO officials say it's meant to deter Iran from targeting Europe.

The state of the U.S. nuclear arsenal was rarely addressed during the presidential campaign. To the extent it was, Trump showed faint understanding of its details. During a Republican primary debate, he appeared unfamiliar with the concept of a nuclear triad, the Cold War-era combination of submarines, land-based missiles and strategic bombers for launching nuclear attacks.

Trump's vanquished campaign rival Hillary Clinton repeatedly cast the Republican as too erratic and unpredictable to have control of the nation's nuclear arsenal.

The president-elect's transition website says he "recognizes the uniquely catastrophic threats posed by nuclear weapons and cyberattacks," adding that he will modernize the nuclear arsenal "to ensure it continues to be an effective deterrent."

Trump has spent the week at Mar-a-Lago, his South Florida estate, meeting advisers and interviewing candidates for a handful of Cabinet positions that remain unfilled. On Wednesday, he met with Pentagon officials and the CEOs of Boeing and Lockheed Martin, companies with lucrative government contracts.

Since winning the election, Trump has complained about the cost of Boeing's work on two new Air Force One planes and Lockheed's contract for F-35 fighter jets. Following the meetings, both CEOs said they had discussed lowering costs of the projects with the president-elect.

On Thursday, Trump pitted the two companies against each other on Twitter. "Based on the tremendous cost and cost overruns of the Lockheed Martin F-35, I have asked Boeing to price-out a comparable F-18 Super Hornet!" he tweeted.

Boeing spokesman Todd Blecher said Thursday, "We have committed to working with the president-elect and his administration to provide the best capability, deliverability and affordability." Lockheed declined to comment.

Trump's tweet came after the close of trading on Wall Street. But in after-hours dealings, shares of Bethesda, Maryland-based Lockheed Martin Corp. fell 2 percent, while Chicago-based Boeing Co.'s stock rose 1 percent.

Boeing and Lockheed are also among the companies pursuing a contract for replacing Minuteman missiles in the U.S. nuclear arsenal. Spokespeople for the two companies declined to comment on whether that contract came up during Trump's meetings with their CEOs.

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