

Oregon bill would help college students access food, housing assistance

By MEERAH POWELL
Oregon Public Broadcasting

SALEM — Higher education advocates are joining with a group fighting hunger to support a bill in the Oregon Legislature aimed at helping relieve food and housing insecurity for students.

The Oregon Student Association, Oregon Community College Association and Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon are pushing lawmakers to pass House Bill 2835, also known as the Benefits Navigator Bill.

That bill would create funding for a full-time position at every community college and public university for a staff member who could connect students to benefits, such as SNAP, often informally called food stamps, and also housing assistance.

The proposed legislation is the result of months of discussions with students and others in campus communities to address needs among college students.

Venus Barnes with Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon said the solution — HB 2835 — came out of a “yearlong engagement process with students” all over the state.

“We held a series of listening circles to ask students about their experiences with campus hunger and what solutions they saw that could help,” Barnes said in a statement. “This bill is a product of that conversation.”

In January and February 2020, Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon, with support from the Oregon



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

House Bill 2835 would fund a “benefits navigator” position at every community college, including Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton, and public universities in Oregon.

Student Association, conducted a series of on-campus listening sessions and online surveys — hearing from nearly 200 students across 11 public Oregon colleges and universities.

About 70% of those students said they had experienced food insecurity in the last 12 months, according to Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon. Twenty percent of those students said they had experienced housing insecurity in the

same time frame.

“Students (are) worrying about their money running out before rent is due, having to skip meals, or not being able to focus in class because of hunger, or having to skip class because they’re having to work extra shifts,” a student from Portland Community College said in a response to the survey.

“What we want from the administrators and the legislators is that they listen and understand us and

take action,” said a student from Western Oregon University in one of the listening sessions.

Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon, the Oregon Students Association and the Oregon Community College Association have partnered for “Hunger-Free Campuses,” a campaign focused on advocating for state-level changes that address student needs insecurities.

A benefits navigator position has existed at Oregon State University

as a pilot program for the past two academic years, the Oregon Student Association said in a news release.

Between 2018 and 2020, that position at Oregon State was responsible for bringing over \$875,000 dollars in SNAP benefits and other resources to students, the Oregon Student Association said.

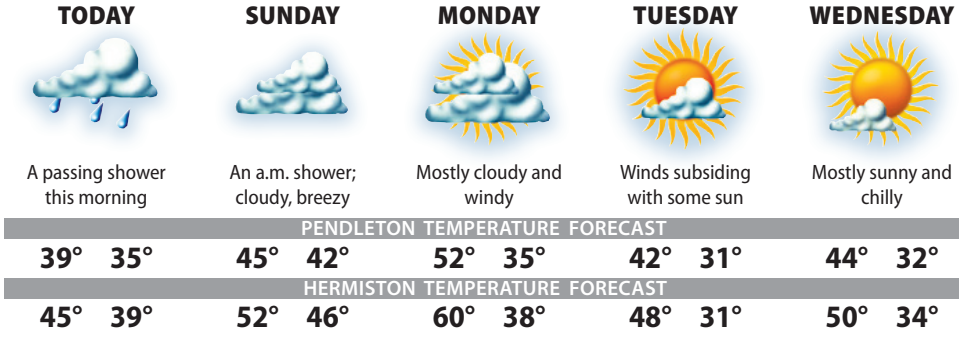
“Our focus is on making sure legislators understand that, at very little cost to Oregon, we can make a lasting impact on student success while bringing more federal dollars into the state,” said Miguel Arellano Sanchez, OSU’s basic needs navigator, in the news release. “This bill is a win-win and we really can’t afford not to implement it if we want our college students to be able to succeed during this pandemic.”

Supporters of the bill say student need-based insecurities have always been around, but the pandemic has only heightened them.

“Campus hunger was already a crisis before COVID-19 and the ensuing economic downturn. Students can’t succeed in school and earn valuable degrees when they’re struggling to keep a roof over their head or find their next meal,” Odalis Aguilar Aguilar, an Oregon Students Association board member and an official with the University of Oregon’s student government, said in a statement.

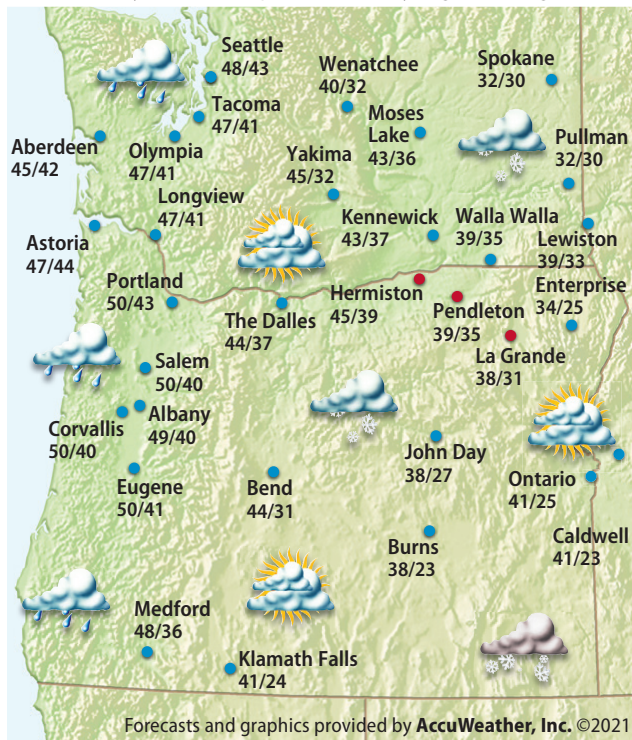
“What we hope legislators understand is that if Oregon’s economy is going to recover from the pandemic, that just can’t be done without addressing statewide campus hunger this session.”

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



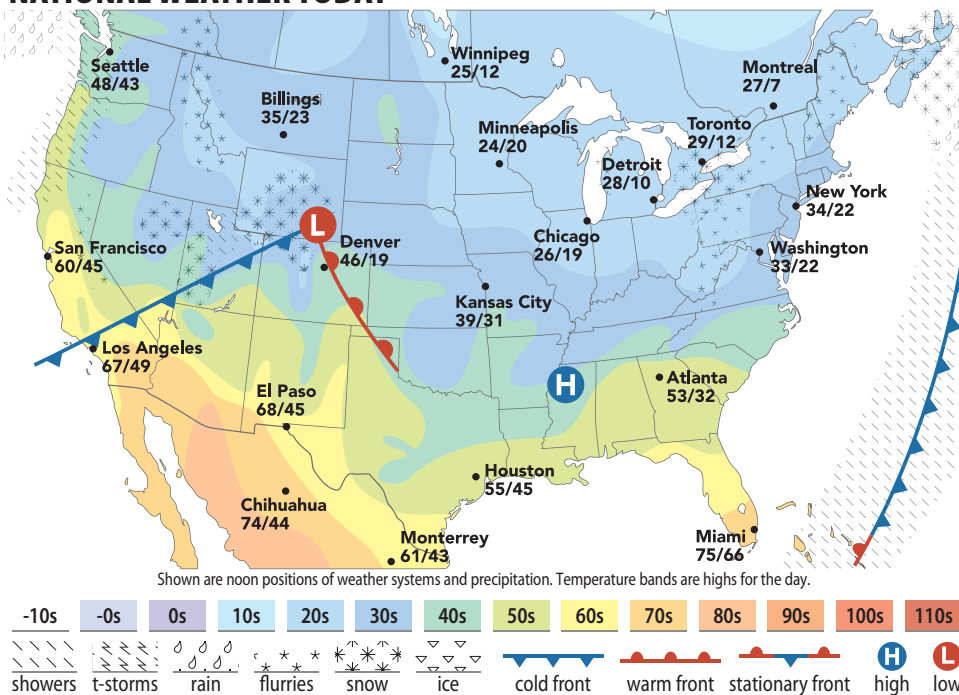
ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	39°	25°
Normals	48°	30°
Records	68° (1930)	8° (2006)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.14"	
Month to date	2.01"	
Normal month to date	0.78"	
Year to date	2.92"	
Last year to date	4.03"	
Normal year to date	2.16"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	43°	26°
Normals	49°	29°
Records	66° (1995)	9° (1936)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	Trace	
Month to date	0.49"	
Normal month to date	0.65"	
Year to date	1.08"	
Last year to date	0.36"	
Normal year to date	1.93"	
WINDS (in mph)		
	Today	Sun.
Boardman	WSW 8-16	SW 10-20
Pendleton	WSW 10-20	SW 10-20
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	6:49 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	5:29 p.m.	
Moonrise today	11:02 a.m.	
Moonset today	1:55 a.m.	

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 90° in Titusville, Fla. Low -21° in International Falls, Minn.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Oregon eager for grocery liquor sales

By ZANE SPARLING
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Hands off that gas pump.

The quirks of life in the Beaver State might bemuse outsiders, but surely true-blue Oregonians cherish our time-honored idiosyncrasies, right?

It's just not so, according to a new survey.

A poll by the Oregon Values and Beliefs Center, a project of DHM Research, found that a majority of state residents are ready to pump their own gas and buy a bottle of spirits at the local supermarket.

Just don't expect them to vote in a sales tax, which three out of four here oppose.

“Support tends to increase among higher-income Oregonians, but no demographic groups reach 30% support for this policy change,” according to a DHM policy brief on a potential sales tax.

Here are the key findings:

- Nearly two-thirds of Oregonians (63%) are in favor of allowing motorists to pump their own gas, rather than relying on an attendant. Demographics showing the strongest support include those making more than \$100,000 per year (73%) and political conservatives (71%). Support is lowest among political moderates, pegged at 55%.
- Even more unifying is the proposal to allow hard alcohol sales in grocery stores, instead of restricting them to state-licensed liquor stores. Roughly two-thirds (65%) support such an idea, including 70% of Democrats and 69% of those living outside the metro area and Willamette Valley. Those aged 65 and up registered the least support, with just 57% in favor.
- Oregonians overwhelmingly gave the thumbs down to creating a new statewide sales tax, with 75% of residents in opposition. Demo-

graphics that most strongly rejected the idea include those without school-age children (79%), those earning less than \$50,000 per year (73%), conservatives (79%) and those living in the outer suburbs (88%). Those making more than \$100,000 per year were most in favor, but only 26% offered support.

• The idea of paying a tax at the cash register became slightly more palatable when paired with a proposed reduction in the state income tax, with half opposed, one-third in favor and the remainder unsure. Opposition was strongest among those aged 65 and up (67%), while those with college education evinced the most support (40%).

DHM surveyed 603 Oregon adults in January, using respondents from a professional panel who were selected to be representative of state demographics. The margin of error for the poll is 2.4% to 4%.

IN BRIEF

Krebs elected region vice president

WASHINGTON — Skye Krebs, a native of Ione, was elected to the Region V vice president for policy for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association during its regional caucus.

Throughout their three-year terms, NCBA regional vice presidents serve as chair of their regional membership committee. Regional vice presidents play a critical role in coordinating regional member activities. They also coordinate regional activities and communications with the Federation Division Regional vice presidents from their respective regions.

“After serving on the Public Lands Council Executive Board for many years, I have come to know several of the affiliated state



Krebs

executives, officers, and producers,” Krebs said. “I feel like I can hit the ground running and I have a bit of fuel left in my tank to serve the beef industry. I'm excited to get started.”

Krebs was born and raised in Ione. He received his Bachelor of Science in general agriculture from Oregon State University. Krebs' roots in the cattle industry run deep, as his family has been ranching in Eastern Oregon for more than 100 years. He and his wife, Penny, own and operate Krebs Sheep Company, where they raise both sheep and cattle in Ione and Wallowa.

Krebs is a member of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, where he currently serves as the Public Lands Council endowment protector chairman, a position he has held since 2011. He also serves as the Wallowa County Animal Damage Control District secretary. In addition, Krebs is involved in the Oregon Sheep Growers Association and the Alpha Gamma Rho Alumni Board.

—EO Media Group

CORRECTIONS: The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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