

Tribe sees effective State Legislative session in 1997

By Justin Martin

This article shows how the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde had success within the 1997 State Legislative Assembly. It focuses on negative legislation, and a quality lobbying effort through the guidance of the Tribal Council.

The 1997 Legislative Session was a very successful one for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

Several positive steps were taken in order to create a more

functional government to government relationship with the State of Oregon. Among these steps were the creation of a legislative team, the education of the Legislative Assembly with regards to Indian issues and sovereignty, and a successful defense of the right to strive for self-sufficiency.

With the onset of Indian gaming in Oregon, the increase in anti-gambling legislation has been immense. There were thirty-nine separate measures that were related to gambling.

Nineteen of these measures were negative legislation that was potentially very dangerous to the Tribe. To counter this danger the Tribe made a successful move in the creation of the legislative team. This team consists of lobbyists Dave Barrows, and Justin Martin, and the Legislative Committee, that was made up of Tribal Council members. The members on this committee were: Tribal Chair Kathryn Harrison, Eugene Labonte, Margaret Provost, Leon "Chip" Tom, Ed Pearsall, and Ed Larsen.

Several other tribal members and department managers also played a key role in the effectiveness of the legislative effort.

The benefits of creating a legislative team were; increased awareness of problems, better communication in an intergovernmental relationship, and an established presence in the State's political environment.

Also extremely helpful to the legislative effort was constant help from the Commission on



Governor Kitzhaber

Indian Services, which is located within the Capitol Building in Salem. Karen Quigley offered informative background information with respect to certain issues. Gladine Ritter also was a great help in organizing and contacting key members of tribes. The Commission also did a wonderful job in bringing the tribes of Oregon together on key issues, and helped to create a dialogue in which the presence and importance of Indian issues could be discussed.

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Grand Ronde Employees at Tribal Information Day at the State Capitol.

1997 Legislation that carried possible impacts upon Tribe

By Justin Martin

This article looks specifically at the four major pieces of legislation that The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde were interested in during the 1997 Legislative Assembly in Oregon.

There were several pieces of legislation in the 1997 Legislative Assembly that could have impacted the Tribe. Among these there were both positive and negative aspects to distinct legislation. The Tribe focused on three categories to look at measures that arose during the session. These three categories were: Gaming, Natural Resources, and various issues with tribal impact.

There were four major items that were vital to the Tribe during the 1997 Legislative Assembly. One was a positive piece of legislation, House Bill 2195. It eventually became House Bill 3009. The rest of the major legislation was negative and therefore the Tribe and the legislative team were forced to be very defensive. The negative measures were Senate Bill 881, Senate Bill 708, and Senate Joint Resolution 28. The effort that the Tribe made in regards to this legislation was through a great deal of lobbying, offering testimony before committees, letter writing, personal appearances by Tribal Council, and finally using support from various other tribes within the state.

Here is a brief summary of some of the Major Legislation from the 1997 Legislative Assembly:

HB 2195/HB 3009

SUMMARY: States' public policy on gambling. Allows Department of State Police to investigate background of gambling licensees. Adds felony gambling offenses to list of crimes for which wiretaps, pen registers and trap and trace devices may be authorized. Changes criminal laws related to gambling. Defines and prohibits unlawful gambling. Creates offense of cheating. Punishes by five years in prison, \$100,000 fine, or both. Repeals criminal statutes related to charitable bingo, lotto and raffles. Modifies laws

related to social games in public places. Establishes statewide licensing standards for social games. Allows Monte Carlo events by charitable organizations. Directs Department of Justice to regulate Monte Carlo events. Establishes limits on annual handle, wagers, number and duration of Monte Carlo events. Allows Department of Justice to license suppliers of gambling equipment and supplies for regulated gambling by charitable organizations.

The original HB 2195 was the centerpiece of the legislation proposed by the Governor's Task Force on Gaming. It is a necessary bill to help deter illegal gambling and to effectively punish cheating, bookmaking, and other possible gambling crimes. This bill would for the first time make it a crime to cheat while gambling. This offense would be a Class C Felony. The bill also confirms that chips and tokens are valued at their gaming face value to determine the amount of theft and the extent of the cheating. Equally important in this bill is the handling of "social" games, which were totally unregulated. Under HB 2195, counties must regulate blackjack and other social games and owners of gaming establishments must undergo a background investigation. While not as strict as State/Tribal Compact requirements, this is a start toward holding gambling establishment owners to the high standards in place for Indian gaming managers.

This bill became HB 3009, and passed both the House and the Senate, and is currently waiting for the Governor's signature to become law. It is also a possibility that this bill will be vetoed by the Governor because of some new language that was added to the bill after it came out of the Task Force.

SB 881

SUMMARY: Requires Governor to consult with Legislative Assembly before and during negotiations with Indian tribes for compacts or amendments to compacts. Requires Governor to submit proposed compacts to Legislative Assembly or legislative officer for review.

This piece of legislation was a direct attack upon State/Tribal relations. The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde has worked hard to be the leaders in State/Tribal relations. This bill was considered a "slap in the face" to tribal sovereignty. Not to mention the four years of negotiations that the Tribe went through with the State of Oregon. The bill did not get out of the Trade and Economic Development Committee.

SB 708

SUMMARY: Requires Legislative Assembly ratification for some intergovernmental agreements.

Senate Bill 708 was a bill that despite its many sponsors, never went anywhere. It is worth mentioning, and placing it within a major legislation category for two reasons: The first being the direct target of Indian tribes and their sovereignty, and secondly the similarities to Senate Bill 881, in the aspect of negative feeling toward the Governor, and more power to the Legislative Assembly. The bill was sent to the Rules and Elections Committee where it had only one public hearing.

SJR 28

SUMMARY: Amends Oregon Constitution to prohibit Oregon State Lottery from operation of video lottery games, including video poker, and on-line games, not including pari-mutuel games. Refers resolution to people at special election held on same date as next biennial primary election.

Senate Joint Resolution 28 began as an all out ban of video lottery games. It went through several changes, and never posed a very serious threat. Until later in the session when it became a severe threat not only to the Tribe, but the Oregon State Lottery, and the Oregon Restaurant Association as well. It was a measure that had a real possibility of moving despite so many interest groups that were against it. It was also the closest that the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde came to being seriously hurt by during the 1997 Legislative Session.