

Numerous new Oregon laws take effect on Jan. 1

BY MIKE ROGOWAY
The Oregonian

SALEM — Oregon lawmakers adopted a range of reforms, policy changes and civil rights protections during this year's five-month legislative session, including new laws designed to promote affordable housing, improve police oversight and make it explicitly illegal to intimidate others by displaying a noose.

Those new laws, and many others, took effect Saturday, Jan. 1. While some were contentious, many passed with overwhelming, bipartisan support.

Police reform

George Floyd's murder by a Minneapolis police officer triggered a national reckoning on civil rights. Oregon lawmakers responded with several bills aimed at improving police conduct and oversight. Here are some of those that take effect Jan. 1:

- Senate Bill 204 gives civilian oversight board access to a database of police encounters and arrests. The bill passed the House 34-22, and the House 18-11.
- Senate Bill 621 gives local jurisdictions the ability to set law for community oversight boards that oversee police discipline. Lawmakers took up this bill at Portland's request. It passed the Senate 20-7 and the House 37-19.
- House Bill 2513 requires

CPR training for police certification and requires police to call for emergency medical aid if a restrained person suffers respiratory or cardiac crisis. The bill passed the House 58-2 and the Senate 24-4.

- House Bill 2929 requires police officers to report misconduct or fitness standards and mandates investigation into such a report with 72 hours. Investigators must report misconduct findings to a state board. The House voted 58-2 for the bill; the Senate approved it 27-2.
- House Bill 2936 creates a background checklist and standardized personal history questionnaire for aspiring police officers and exempts law enforcement from a prohibition on employer access to personal social media accounts. While the law takes effect on Jan. 1, it cannot be used to hire corrections officers until July 1, 2023. It passed the House 54-4 and the Senate 20-8.
- House Bill 3145 requires police departments to report officer discipline to the state within 10 days. The state will publish those reports in an online publicly accessible database. It passed the House 58-1 and the Senate 26-2.
- House Bill 2932 requires Oregon law enforcement to participate in the FBI's national use-of-force database and directs a state commission to analyze the data and report

its findings to the Legislature every year. The bill passed the House 58-1 and the Senate 20-7.

- House Bill 2986 requires police officers be trained to investigate and report bias crimes. It passed both the House and the Senate unanimously.
- House Bill 3059 requires any arrests associated with "unlawful assemblies" to be based on crimes other than a failure to disperse. It also passed the House and Senate unanimously.
- House Bill 3273 limits the circumstances in which law enforcement officers may release booking photos, commonly known as mugshots. Supporters said online publication of mugshots were impinging on people's privacy and preventing them from moving on with their lives, whether or not they were ultimately convicted of crimes. It passed the House 54-4 and the Senate 17-13.

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Public meetings

House Bill 2560 makes permanent a pandemic-era change. It requires government agencies, whenever possible, to stream their meetings online and give the public the opportunity to testify remotely. The bill passed the House 42-5 and the Senate 25-2.

Cold medicine

Oregon was one of just two

states (Mississippi was the other) that required a prescription for cold medicines containing pseudoephedrine, a restriction established to limit people's ability to buy large quantities and use it to make methamphetamine. But lawmakers concluded that a multistate system for tracking purchases, and meth production shifting to labs outside the country, made Oregon's law obsolete. So House Bill 2648 repealed Oregon's restriction. Now, people can buy cold medicines by asking a pharmacist, who registers the transaction with the database. The bill passed the House 54-4, and the House 27-2.

Elections

House Bill 3291 requires Oregon to count ballots mailed the day of the election. Previously, counties would count only ballots actually received on or before Election Day. It passed the House 39-21 and the Senate 16-13. This will delay how quickly election results can be determined but is likely to lead to higher election turnout.

Affordable housing

Senate Bill 8 requires local governments to allow development of affordable housing even on land not zoned for residential use, with some exceptions for lands designated for heavy industry and publicly owned properties next to sites

zoned for school or residential use. It also lowers the duration for which such housing must be classified as affordable, from 40 years to 30. The bill won overwhelming legislative support, passing the Senate 25-5 and the House 46-3.

Hate crimes

Senate Bill 398 makes it a crime to intimidate people by displaying a noose. Violators face up to 364 days in prison and a fine of \$6,250. The bill passed the Senate 27-1 and the House 54-0.

Racial equity

House Bill 2935, known as the Crown Act, bans discrimination in schools or the workplace "based on physical characteristics that are historically associated with race." The law specifies hair style and hair texture are among those newly protected traits. It passed the House 58-0 and the Senate 28-1.

Juvenile suspects

Senate Bill 418 establishes that if a police officer intentionally uses false information to elicit a statement from someone under age 18, that statement will be presumed to be involuntary. The bill passed the Senate 24-4, and the House 53-2.

Teacher unions

Senate Bill 580 requires

school districts bargain with teacher unions over class sizes at schools with high concentrations of low-income students. The bill's original version would have applied more broadly, potentially requiring schools to lower class sizes in high-income schools and raise them in schools with a concentration of low-income students, who have greater learning needs. The Legislature narrowed the bill's scope after The Oregonian/OregonLive reported that it could undermine the state's efforts to provide more equitable outcomes for students of all backgrounds. The House approved the bill 36-21; the Senate voted 18-11 in favor.

Homelessness

Senate Bill 850 requires that death reports for homeless people list the person's residence as "domicile unknown." Supporters hope the bill will help track the number of people who die while experiencing homelessness, something that already happens in Multnomah County. The bill passed 22-5 in the Senate and 52-0 in the House.

Marijuana

House Bill 3369 allows nurses to discuss possible medical use of marijuana with their patients. It passed the House 47-5 and passed the Senate 21-6.



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Boy Scouts Zeke Vowell, 11, left, and Glen Taylor, 14, collect a tree and a donation during the annual Christmas tree pick up on Sunday, Jan. 2, 2022.

Trees

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The Scouts and their parents started at 9 a.m. The group divided the town into four sections then headed out to pick up trees placed near the curb.

Some trees had been outside during the recent snowfall. When Elias Taylor, 13, hefted one of these trees in the air, he yelled as snow slid inside his jacket collar.

But then he smiled, shook off the snow, and hopped back in the truck to continue the job with his brother, Glen, dad, Casey, and fellow Scout Zeke Vowell.

After the volunteers loaded each a trailer or truck bed, the trees were delivered to Wade Williams Field.

Dave Johnson, who stayed at the field to help unload, said the project takes about three to four hours every year.

A Cut Above tree service is donating the time to dispose of the trees this year, said Scoutmaster James Simpson.

Simpson estimated the Scouts gathered 250 to 300 trees this year, and averaged a \$3 donation per pickup. Anyone who would still like to donate can contact Simpson on Facebook, by email at scoutmaster433@me.com or by phone at 541-403-0787.

Snowpack

Continued from A1

In the Willows, for instance, though the water content is below average at Aneroid Lake, on the north side of the range, it's 13% above average at Schneider Meadow, on the southern side but only about 15 miles away.

The situation is similarly variable in the Elkhorn Mountains.

At Eilertson Meadow, along Rock Creek west of Haines, on the east side of the mountains, the water content is 31% above average.

But on the other side of the range near Bourne — a distance of about five miles — the water content is 6% below average.

At Beaver Reservoir, in the La Grande watershed northwest of North Powder, the water content is 12% above average, but at Wolf Creek, several miles away, the water content is 34% below average.

Doug Birdsall is among the irrigation district officials who are hoping for a bountiful snowpack this winter to refill reservoirs depleted by the severe drought in 2021.

Birdsall manages the Powder Valley Water Con-

trol District, which includes Pilcher Creek and Wolf Creek reservoirs and supplies irrigation water to farms and ranches in the North Powder Valley.

Birdsall said the situation is promising.

"It's decent but it's going to take a lot to catch up," he said the morning of Jan. 3.

That process will start this week, as a parade of powerful storms moves into Eastern Oregon.

The National Weather Service is forecasting as much as two to four feet of new snow at the highest elevations this week.

N.E. Oregon Snowpack Report

Measuring Site	Elevation	Snow Water Equivalent (inches)				Snow Depth
		Now	Average	% of avg.	Last year	
Aneroid Lake	7,300	6.2	9.0	69	7.2	27
Beaver Reservoir	5,150	4.6	4.4	112	3.8	26
Bourne	5,800	6.1	6.5	94	5.0	29
County Line	4,530	3.8	2.3	165	1.8	19
Eilertson Meadow	5,440	6.3	4.8	131	4.7	26
Gold Center	5,340	4.9	4.8	102	5.1	22
High Ridge	4,980	11.0	10.2	108	10.1	44
Moss Springs	5,850	9.5	10.4	91	8.3	41
Mount Howard	7,910	6.4	7.2	89	4.8	18
Schneider Meadow	5,400	12.9	11.4	113	10.6	52
Taylor Green	5,740	6.3	8.0	79	7.7	26
Tipton	5,150	4.3	5.3	81	5.5	23
Wolf Creek	5,630	3.8	5.8	66	4.9	31
AVERAGE				100		

Source: U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service

COVID

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Baker City is among the sites in Oregon where samples of wastewater are tested regularly for viruses, including variants.

The most recent Baker City sample was collected on Dec. 15. Information about any variants detected was not available on the OHA database.

The sample had a viral concentration that was down by almost 13% compared with a Dec. 1 sample.

Although officials at Oregon Health & Science University in Portland are projecting a rapid increase in COVID-19 infections and in hospitalizations into early February, evidence suggests that omicron tends to cause less severe illness compared with the

delta variant.

Experts also say that although omicron is more likely to cause breakthrough cases — infections in fully vaccinated people — those who are vaccinated, especially if they have had a booster dose, are considerably less likely to become severely ill.

"Being fully vaccinated, and boosted, is still our best protection," Staten said.

She also encourages residents to stay home if they feel ill, and to continue to follow other precautions such as wearing face masks in indoor public settings.

"All of those measures still play a role in keeping kids in school, and we know how important that is," Staten said.

She encourages people who want a vaccine dose to call the Health Department at 541-523-8211 or call their health provider.

Staten said the Health Department has not been filling all its openings for vaccinations during the past two weeks or so.

The Health Department is planning a vaccination clinic on Jan. 13 in Baker City, with time, location and other details to be announced soon.

According to OHA, the seven-day running daily average of vaccine doses in Baker County has dropped to 34 doses per day after peaking at 91 doses on Dec. 15, following the three-day drive-thru vaccination clinic in Baker City on

Dec. 12-14, when more than 330 doses were administered.

Baker County's vaccination rate of 55.2% of residents 18 and older having had at least one dose ranks as the fifth-lowest among Oregon's 36 counties.

Downward trend in cases continued in December

After a record-high 465 cases during September 2021, an average of 15.5 per day, Baker County's monthly totals have dropped for three straight months.

December's total of 106 cases was the fewest since July 2021, when there were 91 cases.

For the most recent week, Dec. 26-Jan. 1, Baker County reported 29 cases, a slight increase from the previous three weeks, which had totals of 25, 22 and 25 cases.

The county's test positivity rate actually declined during the most recent week. The percentage of tests that were positive was 7.8% from Dec. 26-Jan. 1, compared with rates of 10.1% and 10.4% the previous two weeks.

Breakthrough cases

Baker County had four breakthrough cases, out of a

total of 25, for the most recent week tallied, Dec. 19-25. The breakthrough case rate of 16% was higher than the previous two weeks — 9% and 12%, respectively.

Baker County's breakthrough rate of 16% was much lower than Oregon's overall rate of 36.7% for the week of Dec. 19-25 — the highest weekly rate ever.

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