

Theft

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We've seen a couple other states get hit with incredibly large, sudden waves of claims. We certainly want to avoid that," Gerstenfeld said.

Pressed by The Oregonian, the department acknowledged the sharp spike in attempted identity theft from around 900 cases in 2019 to more than 9,000 last year. Gerstenfeld said the rate of overpayments — money paid to claimants who don't deserve it — increased from 10% in 2019 to at least 14% in 2020.

or the employment department, but some share of them were fraud.

Still, Gerstenfeld said Oregon believes its fraud losses are considerably smaller, on a per capita basis, than the losses in California and Washington. He said those states were unlucky in that they were hit early in the pandemic and that Oregon has learned from problems elsewhere.

Arizona, California, Massachusetts, Michigan, Ohio, Rhode Island, ment Law Project, said the states have legitimate concerns about disclosing information thieves could use.

"If these fraudsters are looking around state to state, and they see a state with a particularly high number, they're going to say: 'Oh, this is going to be an easier one to hack," Evermore said. She said thieves' tactics are constantly evolving, and they're looking for any advantage.

Still, Evermore said, "The public needs to know what's going on, too. It's just hard to figure out how to balance all that."

claims.

Oregon has paid nearly \$8 billion in jobless benefits in the 11 months since the pandemic began last March, more each month than it typically pays in an entire year. An unprecedented 750,000 people have received some class of unemployment benefit during that time.

Without figures on the state's actual fraud losses, it's impossible to know

Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, cochair of the Legislature's joint Committee on Ways and Means. "Being transparent about the deficiencies is not going to incentivize fraud. The fraud already exists."

Rep. David Gomberg, a Democrat representing parts of the Oregon Coast, repeatedly raised the issue of unemployment fraud at legislative hearings this month. But he said he is sympathetic to the employment de partment's position, and intends to seek a confidential briefing to obtain more information.

"We think that probably understates the scale of the issue," Gerstenfeld said. Many of those overpayments were genuine mistakes, by claimants

Washington and Wisconsin have all disclosed estimated fraud losses during the pandemic. Oregon and a few other states, among them Tennessee and West Virginia, have said they will not.

Michele Evermore, researcher and policy analyst at the National Employ-

The employment department is in the process of adding staff as part of an expanded fraud-detection effort, though Gerstenfeld said that wasn't triggered by any recent increase in

for sure whether Oregon has indeed performed better at preventing fraud than it has at paying benefits. Lawmakers are divided over the department's refusal to say how much it has lost.

"California and Washington have been forthcoming with some of their issues. I don't know why we can't," said

"I am frustrated but understand their explanation," Gomberg said. "Again, I would like to know more but not if it results in costs to the fund or more fraud."

Overcharge

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Yoga

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"I believe that the rates should have been cut something in the order of 50-60%," said Robert Eglet, lead counsel for the law firm Eglet

"This is a business and a

cultural activity that is about

as Oregon as things get," said

Livestock already inhabit

Sen. Sara Gelser, D-Corval-

lis, the bill's chief sponsor.

Adams, which filed the lawsuits. "These discounts that were given, were just totally woefully inadequate."

His comments are similar to those made by the Consumer Federation of America in September, which said that the relief provided by insurers was not enough and said state insurance commissioners who regulate the industry had failed "to prevent windfall auto insurer profits as auto claims dropped when driving and auto crashes declined."

Holograms

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model, companies are going to have to innovate around that interplay between the remote employee experience and in-office employee experience," said Lisa Walker, the vice president of brand at Fuze, a teleconferencing service. "The technologies that can solve for that are going to pop."

Holograms might not be the next big thing, but startups in the 3D space are positioning their offerings just in case.

cians onstage in recent years. the projection hardware is still too expensive for most people to afford. Companies, on the other hand, have larger budgets. And now software advancements are unlocking ways to use laptops, computers and smartphones to engage with and stream holograms emitted elsewhere.

In December, ARHT media showed what a hologram-enabled conference could look like as it beamed an executive from Los Angeles to Singapore to speak at an innovation summit. The event brought together a "small group" of attendees and was broadcast live to a larger audience online.

Traditionally, setting up



ARHT Media/Imv

Holographic speakers from Australia, Greece and Germany stand together on one stage.

high-definition holograms requires a team of projection technicians. However, ARHT's HoloPod was designed to be a quick-setup, plug-and-play system that's simpler to deploy.

On the remote side, a presenter would stand in front of a green screen, looking at a shot of the audience on a monitor. Meanwhile, cameras capture the speaker from all angles. At the worksite, someone could roll the HoloPod out of a closet, turn on a computer and connect to a live stream.

ARHT's software strings it all together and will enable presenters to respond in almost real time. People would then see the illusion of the presenter projected onto a reflective mesh.

In video demonstrations, the \$20,000 suite of hologram technology lacks some clarity. You can look at it and tell it's not a real person.

Still, the company enables people to engage with life-size, three-dimensional representations of people who aren't actually there.

"When you see traditional streaming services like Zoom, it's typically just a headshot. You're missing 50% of their body language," said Larry T. O'Reilly, CEO of ARHT Media. "However, when you see somebody in a live hologram, and they appear to be 3D without the need of 3D glasses, your brain is telling you to run the room."

exclusive farm zones, so they wouldn't create conflicts in agricultural areas, and the number of visitors involved in such activities is naturally self-limiting, Gelser said. Large crowds of people wouldn't be attending goat yoga classes at all hours of the

day and night, for example. A "glitch" in existing land use law has caused county governments to object to goat yoga in exclusive farm zones because it's not considered "equine therapy," which was permitted in such areas under a bill passed in 2018, she said

Expanding this provision to include livestock would boost goat yoga, "a great vision that brought people together, helped people engage "This is a business and a cultural activity that is about as Oregon as things get."

- Sen. Sara Gelser, D-Corvallis, chief sponsor of Senate Bill 559

with livestock and connect with each other," Gelser said.

The restriction has reduced revenues, tourism and employment in Oregon farms and decreased opportunities for people suffering from mental health problems or undergoing chemotherapy treatments, said Sean Scorvo, a supporter of SB 559.

The Oregon Farm Bureau and the farmland preservation group 1000 Friends of Oregon draw a distinction between the existing equine therapy provision and the change proposed in SB 559.

Horseback riding is already allowed in exclusive farm zones, so the provision approved in 2018 simply allowed counseling to occur

on-site in a way that's "incidental and subordinate" to the agricultural use, according to submitted testimony from the organizations.

"Here, in contrast, the underlying business is yoga," the letter said.

The groups have urged lawmakers against approving the bill because the presence of livestock doesn't render nonfarm uses "compatible with neighboring agricultural practices" or the statewide goal of preserving farmland.

Were this bill to pass, it is hard to imagine where the line could be drawn between actual farm use of farmland and simply adding animals to any use," according to their testimony.

The three-dimensional light projections have primarily been seen re-creating musi-Companies have wanted to bring them into homes, but