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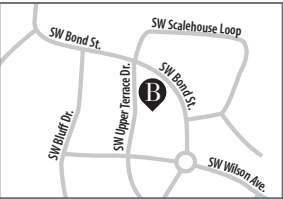
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LOCAL, STATE & REGION

OREGON LEGISLATURE | COMMITTEE MEETINGS THIS WEEK

Lawmakers discussing paid family leave, workforce programs, drug treatment grants

BY HILLARY BORRUD
The Oregonian

Oregon lawmakers have a packed schedule of meetings this week to get updates on how the state is implementing a long list of laws and spending priorities.

Starting Wednesday, Oregon's 90 lawmakers will hold dozens of meetings on topics ranging from drug treatment grants to pleas by parents of severely developmentally disabled children to extend a pandemic program that allowed parents to work as paid caregivers for their children.

All interim hearings, which take place between legislative sessions, will take place online because hearing rooms at the Capitol are under renovation, spokespeople for legislative leaders said. The Senate will hold a floor session Friday to vote on appointments to boards and commissions.

Lawmakers will kick off the online meetings with a sweeping hearing Wednesday morning on a variety of economic topics, from an update on progress rolling out the \$200 million workforce initiative lawmakers and Gov. Kate Brown approved earlier this year to an update on the



Members of the Oregon Senate meet Dec. 13 during a special session of the Legislature in Salem. Lawmakers hold legislative committee days starting Wednesday.

World Athletics Championships coming to Eugene this summer.

Also on Wednesday, the Senate Interim Committee on Labor and Business is scheduled to hear updates from top officials at the Employment Department, including on the status of the paid leave program that lawmakers approved three years ago. It is running

eight months behind schedule. Legislators will also get an update Wednesday on how the state is distributing drug treatment grants, funded with reallocated marijuana taxes under the voter approved Measure 110, which legalized possession of small amounts of hard drugs.

Lawmakers will hear about challenges in Oregon's early

learning programs, which the state has approved money to expand in recent years.

On Thursday, the House Interim Committee on Human Services will hear from parents caring for severely developmentally disabled children. Such parents were able to get paid to do the work during the pandemic and have been advocating

for the state to continue the program, which started amid a shortage of care workers. According to The Lund Report, parents of approximately 300 children around the state have signed up for the program, which requires them to complete the same training and vetting as any other worker. Due to the relatively low pay of \$16 to \$19 per hour, it costs the state \$11 million.

The Senate Interim Committee on Housing and Development is set to hear updates on the state's housing supply and "recent investments, successes and challenges" in tackling homelessness in Oregon, although no details were available Tuesday morning regarding who would provide that information.

In a joint meeting Thursday, House and Senate education committees will hear from Secretary of State Shemia Fagan and state auditors in her office about their recently issued report warning Oregon is at risk of wasting huge new investments in K-12 schools because of the state's weak tracking of learning outcomes and lack of accountability for districts to increase student success.

OREGON ELECTIONS

Clackamas County completes counting blurred primary ballots

BY JAMIE GOLDBERG
The Oregonian

Clackamas County election officials announced Tuesday that the county had finished duplicating virtually all ballots marred with a printing error and were moving on to counting ballots from voters in the military and abroad.

The county appears to have duplicated more than 22,000 ballots over the holiday weekend due to an unexpectedly high number of elections workers and volunteers who showed up to help tally ballots.

Earlier in the week, elections officials said they only anticipated that 211 people would pitch in between Saturday and Monday to hand-duplicate ballots. Instead, 428 people showed up to copy voters' choices onto new ballots, a process necessitated because tens of thousands of ballots were printed with blurred bar codes that couldn't be read by vote



An election worker in Clackamas County uses a purple marker May 25 to transfer votes from a spoiled ballot to a fresh one so the ballot can be scanned.

counting machines.

The printing error and a bungled response by election officials in the days leading up to the election led to results in a handful of key races being delayed for well over a week.

Election officials said they expect all ballots to be pro-

cessed by the end of the week and will be on schedule to certify the election by the June 13 statutory deadline.

Along with processing ballots from members of the military and those abroad, election officials are working to process ballots that need signatures.

Read endorses Kotek for governor after primary loss

BY PETER WONG
Oregon Capital Bureau

State Treasurer Tobias Read has endorsed Tina Kotek, who defeated him in the May 17 Democratic primary for Oregon governor.

Kotek, the former Oregon House speaker from Portland, won 56.1% to Read's 31.8%. Patrick Starnes, the 2018 Independent Party nominee who ran as a Democrat, won 2.1%, and 12 other candidates split the rest of the Democratic votes.

Kotek faces Republican Christine Drazan of Canby, the former House GOP leader, who won 23% in a 19-candidate field, and unaffiliated candidate Betsy Johnson, a former Democratic state senator from Scappoose who plans to qualify by petition for

the Nov. 8 general election.

Read had been endorsed by two former Democratic governors, Barbara Roberts and John Kitzhaber.

Read will remain state treasurer, which he was elected to in 2016 after five terms in the Oregon House from Beaverton. He is in the middle of his second four-year term as treasurer.

"Two weeks ago, Democrats made clear that they want Tina Kotek to be our nominee. I respect their decision and have congratulated the former speaker on her victory. I'm committed to working with her to make Oregon a place where every child can realize their full potential," Read said in a statement Monday.

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LOCAL BRIEFING

COVID-19 community levels for Central Oregon

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention monitors community levels of COVID-19 to help communities decide what prevention steps to take based on the latest data. Levels can be low, medium or high and are determined by looking at hospital beds being used, hospital admissions and the total number of new COVID-19 cases in an area.

The CDC listed the following levels for Central Oregon:

Deschutes County: Medium
Crook County: Medium
Jefferson County: Medium

Precautions the CDC recommends for communities with medium levels:

- If you are at high risk for severe illness, talk to your health care provider about whether you need to wear a mask and take other precautions.
- Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines.
- Get tested if you have symptoms.

— Bulletin staff report



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