

Government Relations Update

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Congressional calendar

Last week the Senate considered legislation to reform the financial regulatory system (S. 3217). The House considered legislation aimed at reducing misspending at federal agencies (H.R. 3393) and improving Defense Department acquisitions (H.R. 5013).

Both the Senate and House are in the fourth week of a seven week work period that will end in late May for a Memorial Day recess.

Budget and appropriations

On April 22 the Senate Budget Committee approved the FY11 Budget Resolution. The resolution largely supports the President's FY11 requests but shrinks discretionary spending by approximately \$4 billion. The \$4 billion cut is to be taken from the State Department, where it will amount to a cut of less than one percent. In addition to the \$4 billion cut, the resolution includes instructions for appropriators to find funds to make up a \$5.5 billion shortfall in funding for Pell Grants in FY11.

The budget resolution is the congressional budget blueprint. It is not signed into law by the President but does set the top-line number for FY11 appropriations. The measure approved by the

Jock Mills, Director
jock.mills@oregonstate.edu
541.737.0725

Kate Sinner, Federal Relations Director
kate.sinner@oregonstate.edu
503.891.3332

Heather Bené, Government Relations Associate
heather.bene@oregonstate.edu
541.737.4514

652 Kerr Administration Building
Corvallis, Oregon 97331-2128
<http://oregonstate.edu/government>

committee includes reconciliation instructions that enable Congress to use the reconciliation process for tax and other revenue measures, allowing such bills to pass the Senate with a majority vote, rather than the 60 votes needed to overcome a filibuster.

It appears that the resolution will also enable another jobs bill and the extension of expired tax provisions, including the estate tax.

Senate Democratic leaders hope the Senate will approve the budget resolution before the Memorial Day recess, but they may not take it to the Senate floor if House Democrats decide not to move their own version. House Democrats are concerned that votes on the budget resolution could be used against vulnerable Democrats in the fall elections. Without a budget resolution, Congress could still move ahead on the FY11 appropriations bills but could not use the reconciliation process.

America COMPETES reauthorization

Last week the House Science Committee approved the America COMPETES Reauthorization. The legislation builds on the original bill which was passed in 2007 by supporting robust budgets for the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy Office of Science, and the National Institute for Standards and Technology. It also promotes STEM education programs, Energy Innovation Hubs, ARPA-E, and many other programs. The following link provides a more detailed description of the [House bill](#).

Rep. David Wu (OR-1) has played a leadership role in the reauthorization of the legislation and OSU has worked closely with his office.

On the Senate side, the Commerce Committee is likely to take the lead on the legislation, with a goal for both chambers to approve the bill prior to Memorial Day recess. Differences between the House and Senate versions would be worked out by a conference committee before the July 4 recess.

Keep Our Educators Working Act of 2010

On April 14, Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), chair of the Senate Appropriations Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee, introduced [S. 3206](#), the “Keep our Educators Working Act of 2010.” Modeled after the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) from last year’s stimulus bill, the Harkin legislation seeks to provide a total of \$23 billion to states for public education, both K-12 and higher education, to prevent further cuts in both sectors.

The bill would direct governors to fill funding gaps proportionally based on the cuts in both the K-12 and higher education sectors. If a state receives more funding than it needs to make up for the cuts, the excess would be used on K-12. A state would be required to maintain a certain level of funding for public education before it could receive any federal funds.

It is estimated that if this legislation were signed into law, it would bring approximately \$271,405,000 to Oregon to support employment in the education sector. S. 3206 could be considered emergency spending that could be incorporated in a funding supplemental bill that would **not** need a financial offset from another fund.

Back in Oregon

Following the completion of the early-year crush of budgetary deadlines and OSU visits to DC, Kate Sinner will be relocating back to OSU’s Portland office in early May. The best way to reach her is still via email at:

kate.sinner@oregonstate.edu.



State updates

May Primary weeks away

Ballots for Oregon's Primary election on Tuesday, May 18 should be in your mail boxes by now. Key issues on the ballot include choosing Democratic and Republican candidates for Governor for the November General Election. Allan Alley and Chris Dudley are the front runners in the Republican contest, though the Republican primary ballot carries a total of six candidates, including 1998 Republican gubernatorial nominee Bill Sizemore and former Republican State Senator and Representative John Lim from Gresham. Democrats John Kitzhaber and Bill Bradbury are contending for the Democratic nomination.

Other contested races include:

- The Democratic nomination for State Treasurer between State Senator Rick Metsger and Ted Wheeler, the former Multnomah County Commission Chair, who was appointed to the position by Governor Kulongoski following the death of Ben Westlund. The winner will face Republican State Senator Chris Telfer (R-Deschutes County) in the November General election.
- The Republican nomination for the 5th Congressional District between State Representative Scott Bruun (R-West Linn) and Fred Thompson, a retired Salem businessperson. Winner of that race will face Democrat Kurt Schrader in his first term.
- Oregon's 1st and 4th Congressional districts which also have contested primaries. In the 4th two Republicans – Janeé Germond and Art Robinson are vying to face Democrat Peter DeFazio. In the 1st, three Republicans – [Rob Cornilles](#), [Douglas Keller](#), and [John Kuzmanich](#) are vying for the nomination to presumably face incumbent David Wu, who must first succeed against a challenger in the Democratic primary, David Robinson.

- A handful of state legislative primary races that involve incumbents being challenged from within their party. Most notable are two NE Oregon House seats where incumbent Republicans Bob Jenson (R-Pendleton) and Greg Smith (R-Heppner) are facing challengers, in large part due to their support in the House for tax measures that were ultimately approved by voters in January.
- A non-partisan election, in which voters will determine whether to retain Susan Castillo, a former Democratic State Senator from Eugene, for a third term or to elect State Representative Ron Maurer, a Republican from Grants Pass, completing his second term in the Oregon House.
- A number of judicial positions, the most notable being a contest between Appeals Court Judge Jack Landau and Oregon Public Utility Commission Administrative Law Judge Allan Arlow for a seat on the Oregon Supreme Court.

Statewide, voters will also consider two ballot measures aimed at financing capital projects at K-12 schools (Ballot Measure 68) and universities and community colleges (Ballot Measure 69). Here is a link to information put out by the Oregon University System on [Measure 69](#), which was referred to voters by the legislature when it convened in February. No arguments in opposition to either measure were submitted for inclusion in the voter's pamphlet. The [Oregonian](#) recently ran a story on the measures.

Voters in Lane and Polk Counties will consider the creation of local tax jurisdictions to support 4-H and Extension programs – Ballot Measure 20-158 in Lane County, Ballot Measure 27-100 in Polk County. Similar measures were passed by voters in Linn and Clackamas Counties in the November 2008 General Election. Currently 19 of Oregon's 36 counties have created taxing districts, rather than relying on county appropriations, for supporting Extension programs.

Here is a link to the [Oregon voters' pamphlet](#), which have already been delivered to most Oregon households.