



West

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

Oregon State Visit

On March 11 through 13, Edgar Ruiz, Director of CSG West, along with staff member Erica Miller traveled to Salem, Oregon for a visit with state legislators and staff. The visit provided opportunities to meeting with legislators, legislative staff, CSG West committee members, and Western Legislative Academy (WLA) alumni to learn about the session priorities, as well as deliver information on current member programs and services.

Prior to the visit, Oregon made history when Governor Kate Brown signed into law the nation's first statewide rent control measure ([SB 608](#)). The measure includes a maximum limit on rental rates based on the annual change in consumer price index, restrictions on lease terminations, and landlord exemptions from certain requirements. A complex piece of legislation aimed at protecting tenants from no-cause evictions and limiting rent increases, it puts Oregon at the forefront of a national housing conversation.

Legislation addressing funding for the Oregon Reinsurance Program ([HB 2010](#)) was also passed and signed by the Governor. Funding will be provided through an extension of existing assessments on insurance carriers that were set to expire this year, a 0.5% increase in the percentage of the assessment, and the inclusion stop-loss coverage in the scope of assessments made. Also included is the requirement for the Department of Consumer and Business Services to request an extension of the federal waiver for state innovation.

With recent illness outbreaks across the country, the topic of vaccination requirements and exemptions has been a subject of much conversation. Seeking to limit vaccine exemptions against restrictable diseases such as tetanus and pertussis, the introduction of [HB 3063](#) prevents child vaccination exemptions for reasons other than those indicated by a medical diagnosis. Provisions also limit in-person participation of unvaccinated children in schools and school related activities and offers access to online schooling for those who decline school required vaccinations.

Another topic of great debate in the legislature is the Clean Energy Jobs bill ([HB 2020](#)) which aims to implement cap and trade to reduce carbon emissions statewide. If enacted, existing greenhouse gas emission and reduction goals will be modified, and a cap placed on allowed emissions. Oversight will be managed by the newly created Carbon Policy Office. While initial details of the legislation provide exemptions from the cap for agriculture and forestry business, concerns remain that increased fuel and energy costs will negatively impact profit margins in these industries.



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Established in January 2018, the [Joint Committee on Student Success](#) conducted state-wide learning tours prior to the start of the 2019 session. From the tour, the committee developed an outline of recommended policy initiatives that address key takeaway items such as the need for stable and adequate funding, access to high-quality early learning programs, and additional support for both physical and mental health. Three sub-committees addressing accountability and transparency, early childhood education, and revenue continue to work towards solutions.

The session has also produced a ban on off-shore drilling ([SB 256](#)), signed by Governor Brown on March 27, and the legislature continues to review a number of bills related to firearm ownership, safety, and permitting ([HB 2251](#), [HB 2287](#), [HB 2291](#), [HB 2298](#), [HB 2505](#), [HB 2546](#), [HB 2705](#), [SB 87](#), [SB 275](#), [SB 501](#)).

The legislature is currently scheduled to adjourn June 30.

