



**West**

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

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## Oregon State Visit

On February 10 through 12, CSG West Director Edgar Ruiz, along with staff member Erica Miller, traveled to Salem, Oregon for a visit with state legislators and staff. The visit provided opportunities to meet with legislators, legislative staff, and CSG West committee members to learn about session priorities, as well as deliver information on current member programs and services. A gathering of Western Legislative Academy (WLA) alumni provided a chance to discuss the 2019 Academy, members eligible to apply for the 2020 WLA class, and additional training and development opportunities provided by CSG West and CSG. As Co-Chair of the professional development working group, Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, shared the focus of the working group, as well as thoughts on how members can support future efforts to expand training programs.

The opening of 2020 legislative session welcomed two new legislative leaders – Representative Barbara Smith Warner as the new House Majority Leader and Representative Christine Drazan as the House Republican Leader. CSG West staff worked to catch up with these new leaders, as well as others, during the visit to explore opportunities for CSG West to support their efforts. Visits with legislative member revealed a number of pending retirements, including Senate Republican Leader Herman Baertschiger, Jr., which was announced after the conclusion of session. The contributions of departing members will be greatly missed, but staff will look forward to supporting the new members in their efforts as they begin next year's session.

On even numbered years the Oregon legislative session is short with a scheduled 35 days for legislative business. This year, a total of 258 bills were introduced, including efforts to address racial disparities in home ownership, safe storage for guns, health care access, campaign finance reforms, earthquake preparedness, changes to wildfire response, and funding to address mental health and foster care needs. As with prior years, several bills from the 2019 session were reintroduced for consideration.

Targeting greenhouse gas emissions, [SB 1530](#) was a carryover bill from the prior session. As it did last year, this legislation triggered heated debate that resulted in a walk out of nearly all Republican lawmakers two weeks prior to the scheduled sine die. With chamber quorum unable to be met in either chamber, the majority of introduced legislation was put on hold and only [three bills passed](#) into law before the session was formally concluded three days prior to the constitutional deadline of March 8, 2020. Discussion of a special session have been noted, but no formal calls have yet to be made at the time of this publication.