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February Newsletter: Update from the Capitol

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OREGON STATE REPRESENTATIVE
NEWS FROM **Pam Marsh**

Wednesday, February 22, 2017

Dear friends & neighbors,

We are a few weeks into the 2017 Legislative Session, and the Capitol is bustling with hearings, meetings, discussions and floor sessions. My team has been at work since I was sworn in on January 9, setting up my office in the Capitol and getting our systems in place. Now we have settled in to the routine of meeting with constituents, working on committees and attending floor sessions.

I've been assigned to serve as vice-chair of the House Committee on Economic Development and Trade. I'm also a member of the House Committee on Revenue, the Joint Committee on Tax Credits and the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on General Government. It's a full agenda that will allow me to address some of the issues critical to our region: identifying revenues to fund education, health care and other basic services, as well as strategies to grow business and support the private sector.

Certainly the biggest issue we face at this point is a \$1.8 billion budget deficit. The deficit reflects costs inherent in health care transformation, increases in the PERS retirement system, and expenditures imposed by initiatives approved by voters last November. I'm committed to fill as much of the funding gap possible. The alternative is short-changing our future by making cuts to education or other key services.

Our budget crisis is a stark reminder that the underlying tax system that supports public services in Oregon is inadequate and outmoded. As they say in Silicon Valley, we need

to think different. We are beginning a conversation around these issues that will continue throughout this session and likely beyond.

Meanwhile our Federal Government is in turmoil. Efforts to dismantle health care reform, deport millions of immigrants, silence the EPA, reinvest in coal and generally deny the reality of climate change are just the beginning. Here in Oregon, we need to be ready to respond at a moment's notice to changes in federal funding and/or policy to make sure that Oregonians continue to have access to quality health care, clean air, clean water and other essentials. And we must stand up for our neighbors and coworkers who have been denied a path to legal residency or citizenship for many decades.

We must also move quickly to address climate change. I will be looking for opportunities this session to work on legislation to limit greenhouse gas emissions and to develop renewable energy sources that will enable us to localize energy and create jobs.

This is the first of a series of updates that I will share in the coming months. I hope that you will keep in touch with me about the issues you care about. And if you happen to come up to Salem, please stop in to my office, H-375 on the third floor of the State Capitol!

Best,
Pam



On February 6 I gave [this speech](#) on the house floor about the Trump Administration's hastily enacted executive order on "border security and immigration." In the short time it was in effect, we saw impacts locally from the poorly conceived and inhumane travel ban.

News outlets are reporting that the Trump administration is nearing completion of a replacement executive order since the first was struck down in court.

Upcoming Events

Members of the 2017 Ways & Means Committee are hosting a series of statewide public hearings, seeking input from community members regarding the state's budget crisis.

Ways & Means Roadshow - Ashland

Friday, February 24th

5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

SOU Rogue River Room (inside the Stevenson Union)

1250 Siskiyou Blvd, Ashland OR 97520

AllCare Health has scheduled two public forums to discuss mental health care in Jackson County. This is the place to bring your questions and concerns about the future of mental health services in Jackson County.

AllCare Health Community Mental Health Public Forum - Ashland

Saturday, February 25

12:30 PM to 2:00 PM

Pioneer Hall - 73 Winburn Way, Ashland OR 97520

AllCare Health Community Mental Health Public Forum - Medford

Saturday, February 25

5:30 PM to 7:00 PM

Jackson Public Library - 205 S Central Ave, Medford OR 97501

The American Red Cross Cascades Region is helping our community be prepared for disasters such as a 9.0 Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake by holding the Prepare Out Loud earthquake preparedness forum.

Red Cross Prepare Out Loud Presentation - Ashland

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

6:00 PM to 7:30 PM

Ashland Christian Fellowship - 50 W Hersey St, Ashland OR 97520

Red Cross Prepare Out Loud Presentation - Medford

Thursday, March 9, 2017

6:00 PM to 7:30 PM

Smullin Center at the Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center - 2825 E Barnett Rd, Medford, Oregon 97504

My Team

Nolan Pleše (right) is my Policy Director. Nolan is a graduate of Portland State University where he obtained a bachelor's degree in Political Science. Nolan has done



work with organizations such as the Western States Center that works to connect community organizations to challenge and transform individuals, organizations and systems to achieve racial, gender and economic justice. He previously worked for Senator Diane Rosenbaum who retired from the legislature in 2016. I am excited to have

Nolan on board, and know he will fit right into our politically involved district!

Molly McGuire (left) is my Legislative Aide. She has worked on campaigns and for political organizations in Oregon since 2008. Molly is in the office three days a week and can help you set meetings or access state assistance.

Legislation to watch:

Senate Bill 3 - Suction dredge mining ban. This bill creates permanent restrictions on suction dredge mining -- a form of recreational gold mining that shreds riverbeds and degrades and even destroys fish habitats. I will sponsor this bill when we have a version in the House. Our dear friend Senator Alan Bates fought passionately on this issue and my colleagues and I aim to pass this important piece of environmental protection in his honor.

House Bill 2469 - Protecting local decisions regarding GMO farming. In 2014, Jackson County residents voted to make the county Oregon's only GMO-free agricultural area. House Bill 2469 will allow other counties in the state to designate similar GMO-free zones.

House Bill 2038 - *Farm to School* funding. This bill funds the state's *Farm to School* programs, which allow schools to purchase Oregon food products and offer food-, agriculture-, and garden-based educational activities. In January I visited the Farm to School classroom at Phoenix-Talent High School and had the opportunity to hear students talk about the tremendous benefits of their curriculum.

House Bill 2232 - Reproductive Health Equity Act. This legislation will ensure that all women in Oregon have access to the full range of reproductive health care, including birth control, well-woman care, prenatal care, and testing for sexually transmitted infections, at \$0 out of pocket costs.



I'm so pleased to display this painting on loan from local artist Harriett Rex Smith in my office in the Capitol. The painting, titled "Homeless", is a beautiful and poignant reminder of the housing issues that we face in House District 5 and the rest of the State of Oregon.

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