



OREGON STATE REPRESENTATIVE

NEWS FROM DAVID GOMBERG

We're Halfway There!

Greetings!

Last Friday marked the halfway point of the 2017 Legislative Session. With the exception of tax bills, budget bills, and bills in the House and Senate Rules committees, measures which have not had a committee vote now dead.

About 2500 proposals were introduced this session. When we adjourn in July, approximately 800 are expected to be signed into law. Many bad bills—like banning alcohol on the beach or taxing old cars and coffee—are no longer a concern. But that also means a few of the bills I support will not be moving forward.



Rep. Gomberg Carrying HB 2152 on House Floor

In many ways the easy part is behind us. Simple, “technical fix” measures that make consensus changes to popular programs are moving forward nicely. Slightly more contentious bills have been amended to resolve potential conflicts and are also moving forward. Most of the legislation we have approved has passed with bipartisan—and frequently unanimous—support.

The rest of session will be largely devoted to passing a budget for the 2017-2019 biennium. This is the only action the legislature is constitutionally required to complete before July 9th. The challenge is to ensure the final product reflects Oregonians’ strong support for education, working families, health care, and retirees.

How we achieve that is uncertain, but I am optimistic we will avoid the dire meat-axe cuts that are currently on the table. I look forward to continuing conversations with my colleagues and folks like you from my district to find sensible answers.

In the meantime, here is a brief rundown on a few things I've been working on for the Central Coast and Coast Range:

Supporting Oregon's Ports:

House District 10 includes five public ports which together support thousands of good jobs in our community. This year I have been working with my colleagues in the Coastal Caucus to strengthen Oregon's ports and the essential work they do.

HB 2899 clarifies ports' ability to enter into intergovernmental agreements with other state and local agencies. This allows them to have more certainty in their operations and be a better neighbor to nearby organizations.

HB 2900 explicitly allows ports to advertise the good work they do. This authorizes them to do better economic development work as well as publicize great community events—like the Port of Toledo's annual Wooden Boat Show—that they sponsor.

HB 2901 increases the value threshold for land purchases above which a port needs to get a second appraisal. This will help ports better respond to their real estate needs without incurring (and passing along to customers) higher costs.

And finally **HB 2902** clarifies that public ports are allowed to operate shipyards. This is especially important in Lincoln County, where the only privately-owned boat repair facility closed in 2008. The Port of Toledo reluctantly purchased that facility for the good of the community, spent \$1 million to clean it up, and has been running it since 2010 with great success. My bill is an effort to head off costly litigation with the former owner, who is absurdly claiming that the boatyard he sold (knowing full well its intended use) is now an unfair competitor to his facility in Reedsport.

All four bills have passed the House and will soon be considered in the Senate.



Reps. Gomberg, Whisnant, Witt, and Sen. Johnson Supporting Housing Bills in Committee

Increasing the Housing Supply:

The good news is that Oregon is experiencing its lowest unemployment rate since the 1970's. If you drive up and down Hwy 101 you'll see "Help Wanted" signs everywhere. Restaurants, hotels, gift shops, (and even kite stores), have plenty of customers looking to spend their dollars. But affordable workforce housing availability has been a major barrier to businesses looking to hire and expand, especially in coastal counties.

With that in mind, I have been working with advocates on a series of bills that will ease this bottleneck and help employees find decent, affordable housing near where the jobs are.

HB 2570 will help great organizations like Habitat for Humanity and Neighborworks Umpqua provide homeownership grants to low-income Oregonians. Studies show that homeownership has significant individual and community benefits; families enjoy better stability, wealth building, health, and education outcomes. And those stable families help form the bedrock of safe and prosperous neighborhoods.

HB 2912 establishes a revolving fund to help housing organizations purchase buildable land. This bill is based on a wildly successful program that has been operating in Minnesota for years. Especially for homes built with donated labor and materials, land is a major cost driver for affordable housing. Bringing those costs down will help get more families into their own homes, with all the benefits that brings.

HB 2961 will help low-income homeowners repair and rehabilitate older homes. It is a much better use of money to repair a roof than to wait until the rafters rot out and the home has to be rebuilt. But in low-income households, there often isn't enough money to make critical cost-saving repairs when they are needed. And that can often cost homeowners their home. This bill will help keep folks in safe, decent housing at relatively little cost.

HB 3175 will expand the wildly successful LIFT housing program. LIFT gives a little extra boost to Oregonians who are just short of being able to afford a home of their own. Owning your own home, again, improves health, wealth, and family stability. It improves community stability as well since homeowners stay longer and build connections with their neighbors. This bill clarifies that Oregonians who make up to 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) qualify for homeownership loan assistance through LIFT.

These bills have also all passed the House and are on their way to the Senate for further consideration.

Lettings Small Business Development Centers Shine:

I have often said that Oregon's network of community college-based Small Business Development Centers is one of the best things the state does. If you are a talented baker and want to start a business, you likely know lots about frosting and cookies, but very little about QuickBooks or labor law.

Small Business Development Centers are where you can go for free counseling and low-cost business courses to turn your dream into a money-making venture.

Unfortunately, federal Small Business Administration rules strictly limit what SBDC's can use their funding to accomplish, and advertising their fantastic offerings is not on that list. So we have this great resource that many people have never heard about. **HB 2152** fixes that by allowing SBDC's to use state funds to advertise their programs.

On a related note, if you are looking to start, boost, or expand your small business, please don't hesitate to contact our fantastic SBDC's at Oregon Coast Community College and Tillamook Bay Community College through the links below:

<https://clients.bizcenter.org/reg.aspx?mode=counsel&cer=2160&subloc=0>

<http://www.bizcenter.org/locations/tillamook/overview>

Housing, ports, and small business are a few of the issues I'm working on. Please check in with our office if you have questions about these or any other legislative issues.



Rep. Gomberg Meets with Veterans in Lincoln City

Out and About in District 10:

Although I'm in Salem all week, I'm still making an effort stay involved with our local communities and to hear what all of you think about our work in the Capitol.

Town Hall in Sheridan: We had a small but enthusiastic group gather at Sheridan High for a great series of questions and conversation.

Falls City Community Night: My staff and I had a table at the Community Center to meet and talk with the many good people who came out to learn about local services and programs.

Newport Chamber of Commerce: My wife Susan and I had a great evening at the annual Chamber fundraising dinner. I was also presented at a Newport lunch forum and have one scheduled for Lincoln City in May.

March for Science: I was one of the 800 good people who showed up in the wind and rain to defend and celebrate science and the important relationship it has with livability, local industry, and the environment our kids and grandkids will inherit.

Lincoln City Community Days Banquet: This Saturday evening, I'm looking forward to attending the Community Days Banquet with Susan. Community Days is a great way for the city to come together and show appreciation for our great coastal volunteers.

Bi-Weekly Video Teleconference: Senator Roblan and I will continue our electronic availability every other Friday. Join us at 7:45am at the Lincoln City or Newport OCCC campus.

As always, thank you for the trust you place in me each and every day. It is a true honor to represent the people of this large and diverse district in Salem. If I can ever be of any assistance to you, please do not hesitate to be in contact.

Warm regards,

Rep. David Gomberg

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