

SOU in Salem – Notes from the Capitol v. 2026, week 5

...All's well that ends well.

- William Shakespeare

The Big News:

- **HB 5024 passes; containing \$15 million funding package for SOU stabilization** - The Legislature's budget reconciliation bill contains a one-time \$15 million investment to provide stabilization for SOU through the current biennium. The bill also contains a \$500,000 appropriation for the HECC to contract with a consultant to SOU develop a long-term plan for a sustainable institution, to be completed by April 30, 2026. In a period of budget constraints, this investment was not predictable at the beginning of the session. Many thanks go to Representative Marsh, who advocated early and hard for this funding, as well as Senator Golden, Governor Kotek and the legislative leadership for prioritizing this bridge funding when many other requests were unsuccessful.
- **Rep. Marsh's bill to assess higher education structure and funding approved** – Legislators are beginning to focus on higher education in Oregon and realize that action is needed. HB 4125 directs the HECC to analyze the most sustainable system of post-secondary public institutions in Oregon, their distinct missions, and funding challenges and to provide recommendations to the Oregon Legislature. A preliminary report is due by October 1, 2026 and a final report due by April 1, 2027. It is understood that the HECC will contract out for at least a large portion of this work; a \$2.5 million appropriation is being provided to ensure the study. The bill requires HECC to consult with higher education institutions, faculty and staff in developing the reports.
- **Transportation referendum date change signed into law by Governor, faces court challenge** – SB 1599, passed largely along party lines, was approved by the House this week and signed into law by Governor Kotek. The bill is intended to reset the date of the referendum vote on the Transportation Package. The issue of when voters will be able to vote on the package will be settled in the courts over the next several weeks.
- **Legislators adjourn; more work ahead on budget in 2027** – The Oregon Legislature adjourned on Friday, having successfully avoided the worst feared cuts to publicly funded programs. However, due to expected reductions in federal funding from HR 1, and increased costs of health care as well as declining state income tax revenue, budget pressures are expected to be very high when legislators return in January for the "long session".

Bills of Interest:

- [SB 1501](#)-Funding package for Moda Center renovation – Passed both chambers and awaiting Governor's signature.
- [SB 1507](#)-Targeted Changes to Oregon's Tax Code to support working families (disconnecting from federal provisions) – Passed both chambers and awaiting Governor's signature.
- [SB 1512](#)-Prosperity 10,000 Workforce Program Expansion – Passed both chambers and awaiting Governor's signature.
- [SB 1538](#)-Promoting Early Literacy for School-Age Children – Passed both chambers and awaiting the Governor's signature. (Note- The A-8 amendment allowing community college name changes did not move forward.)

- [SB 1547](#)-Creating a new licensed discipline of behavioral health and wellness practitioner – Passed both chambers and awaiting Governor’s signature.
- [SB 1599](#)-Resets the date for the Referendum on Transportation Package from November to May 2026 – Signed into law by Governor (and subject of a court challenge).
- [HB 4060](#)-Fluorescent Light Bill – Passed both chambers and awaiting Governor’s signature.
- [HB 4079](#)-Safeguarding students and families during immigration enforcement – Passed both chambers and awaiting Governor’s signature.
- [HB 4084](#)-Fast Tracking the creation of “Enterprise Zones” (Gov’s Economic Development Bill) - Passed both chambers and awaiting Governor’s signature.
- [HB 4124](#)-Directing HECC to study or contract for a study to recommend an optimal structure for post-secondary institutions and affordability (Marsh Bill) – Passed both chambers and awaiting Governor’s signature.
- [HB 4138](#)-Requiring Law Enforcement officials to be identifiable – Passed both chambers and awaiting Governor’s signature.
- [HB 4161](#)-Ethics provision; limits public officials to receive no more than \$100 in merchandise in a calendar year – Passed both chambers and awaiting Governor’s signature.
- [HB 5204](#)-Budget Reconciliation Bill, containing \$15 million in stabilization funding available to SOU for the 2025-27 biennium. Passed both chambers and awaiting Governor’s signature.
- [SCR 205](#)-Adjourns the 2026 Legislature – Passed both chambers and went into effect Friday afternoon.

Things to consider:

- What can you do this next week that will support SOU’s immediate stability and its future?

What we are especially focused on:

- Supporting coordinated communications and events on SOU’s funding package and Rep. Marsh’s higher education study bill
- Monitoring Governor’s activity on legislation approved in the 2026 Session.