



Oregon  
**PERS**  
RETIREES INC.

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## RETIREMENT NEWS YOU CAN USE



### PANDEMIC SHAPES 2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

After a contentious 2021 session and redistricting process, the 2022 session was a stark contrast, with little of the drama and partisan animosity that have been prevalent in previous years.

This session was similar to last in a few ways. With the pandemic still serving as a backdrop, committee hearings were once again conducted virtually, limiting participation to written and video testimony. And despite the capitol being open to the public, the halls were largely deserted due to disagreements on mask mandates and pandemic-

related measures.

The short 35-day session was primarily defined by two things: leadership changes and money.

With a general election coming in November, the House saw major changes as leaders opted resign from their legislative posts in order to focus on statewide races. Both House Speaker Tina Kotek (D-Portland) and House Minority Leader Christine Drazen (R-Canby) stepped down before session began to focus on their gubernatorial race campaigns.

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*The Oregon PERS Retirees, Inc. (OPRI) is the state's largest organization that exists solely to protect the rights and benefits of Oregon's retired public employees. We serve retirees like you by monitoring PERS disbursements, advocating for you at the Legislature and, when necessary, defending you in court. To learn more, please visit our website: [www.opri.org](http://www.opri.org)*

## 2022 SESSION WRAP UP - CONTINUED

*Continued from cover*

This left the door open for new leadership, with Representative Dan Rayfield (D-Corvallis) assuming the role of Speaker, and Representative Vikki Breese Iverson (R-Prineville) stepping into the Republican Leader role.

But by far the biggest element to session was the sheer amount of discretionary money available for legislators to spend. Due to higher than expected income tax revenues and a large tranche of federal pandemic relief, additional spending totaled \$5.8 billion, including nearly \$1.5 billion in general funds and \$2.2 billion in federal funds. The general budget alone is now \$1.4 billion higher than was set last June for the 2021-2023 biennium. Among the spending priorities included: one-time stimulus checks to low-income taxpayers (\$200 million); Governor's Brown's 'Ready Future Oregon' workforce initiative (\$200 million); climate change initiatives (\$100 million); and affordable housing and shelter projects (\$400 million).

## Shake up coming for 2023 legislature

Changes are on the way for the 2023 legislature, thanks in part to a governor's race without an incumbent for the first time in 20 years.

Weeks before the 2022 session began, long-time House Speaker Tina Kotek (D-Portland) resigned from the Oregon Legislature in order to focus on her campaign for governor. Likewise, Senator Betsy Johnson (D-Scappoose) and House Minority Leader Christine Drazen (R-Canby) stepped down from their legislative roles to focus on their prospective gubernatorial races. The primary election for Oregon's next governor will be held May 17th, and is crowded on both the Democrat and Republican sides.

As the 2022 session came to a close, a whopping 19 House members and five Senators announced they would be leaving the legislature, including notable legislative leaders Senate President Peter Courtney (D-Salem), House Majority Leader Barbara Smith Warner (D-Portland), and long-time Senators Lee Beyer (D-Springfield) and Chuck Thomsen (R-Hood River). All these changes mean new voices are coming to Salem.



## IN THE NEWS

# Governor signs OPRI priority bill into law

On July 14, 2021, Governor Kate Brown signed House Bill 2875 into law. It went into effect on September 25, 2021.

The signing of this bill is the culmination of three years of working with the PERS Agency and multiple legislative sessions.

House Bill 2875 was a bill that combined two of OPRI's priority bills—HB 2867 and HB 2385—which were introduced during the 2021 Legislative session. HB 2867 was introduced by OPRI as a way to more quickly reinstate Tax Remedy Payments for retirees who are unable to timely confirm their Oregon residency prior to the December 31 deadline. Meanwhile, HB 2375 worked to protect part-time employees working to become vested in the PERS system, but were unable to achieve the 600 hours per year threshold due to the pandemic.

OPRI thanks Representative Paul Evans (D-Monmouth) for introducing HB 2867 and Representative Ken Helm (D-Beaverton) for introducing HB 2375 and their ongoing work on behalf of PERS members.



## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

On November 22, 2021, the Oregon Supreme Court dismissed two lawsuits attempting to block the redistricting plan signed by Governor Brown in September. The lawsuits claimed Democrats had drawn districts that would give them an advantage at the Capitol.



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