

After an early week partisan meltdown, legislators reached a compromise on a proposal to keep some of the corporate kicker to put money in a rainy day fund and, while nobody is signing Kumbaya yet, it does appear that working together to set a state agenda has trumped the caucus strongholds once again. In other good news, the revenue forecast unveiled Thursday showed the state's economy is stable, even up by the tiniest frog hair, and while everyone will still have to hold their breath until the May forecast is released, no budgets have been put on mid-session life support. You can see the forecast at <http://www.oregon.gov/DAS/OEA/docs/economic/executive.pdf>.

OCCA continues to work for an appropriation of \$529 million into the community college support fund, all our requested capital projects, and funding to start up the new Shared responsibility financial aid model.

Another highlight of this eighth week is that ten of the community college presidents were invited to appear before the Higher Education Subcommittee of the House to share their visions and challenges for their college. The other seven presidents will be in front of the committee on Monday, March 5 at 1 p.m. Live streaming video of this and other hearings is available on line at <http://www.oregonchannel.org/>.

Senate Bill 426 (the Educators Benefit Board) is still be fast-tracked through the process. It is likely to reach the Senate floor sometime next week. Because this bill started out in a joint committee, it could conceivably move from the Senate floor to the House floor without returning to a substantive committee. That would eliminate any opportunity for us to get the bill amended. This bill is extremely dangerous for community colleges because of its potential to dramatically raise employee health care costs. Proponents say it won't but because there is no real data being considered, it is difficult to counteract their arguments.

Two opposing bills to update last session's Expanded Options legislation are being worked on. Senate Bill 652 by Senator Gordly (D, Portland) and Senate Bill 23 by Senator Walker (D, Eugene) add amendments to the current statute. Both bills retain the compromise payment language that Community College's and school districts will negotiate a fair contract. The difference between the two bills is that SB 23 lists several opt outs for school districts. It appears SB 23 will be the preferred bill endorsed by school boards.

Bills we are looking at in the coming week include:

1. HB 2789 (Remedial education costs)

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/hb2700.dir/hb2789.intro.pdf>

2. HB 2767 (Workforce Innovation Council)

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/hb2700.dir/hb2767.intro.pdf>

3. SB 671 (Public records)

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/sb0600.dir/sb0671.intro.pdf>

4. SB 761 (System development charges)

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/sb0700.dir/sb0761.intro.pdf>

5. HB 2846 (Rainy Day Fund)

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/hb2800.dir/hb2846.intro.pdf>

6. HB 2891 (Union representation)

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/hb2800.dir/hb2891.intro.pdf>

7. HB 2892 (Union organizing and state funds)

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/hb2800.dir/hb2892.intro.pdf>

8. SB 23 (Expanded Options)

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/sb0001.dir/sb0023.intro.pdf>

9. SB 713 (Education Reform Task Force)

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/sb0700.dir/sb0713.intro.pdf>

10. SB 777 (School Reform Task Force)

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/sb0700.dir/sb0777.intro.pdf>

11. SJR 24 (Healthcare Workforce)

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/sjr1.dir/sjr0024.intro.pdf>

12. SJR 27 (Double Majority)

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/sjr1.dir/sjr0027.intro.pdf>

Hearings scheduled for the coming week include:

A. Community College Presidents Informational Hearing, House Education, March 5, 1pm, HR D

B. HB 2623 (Eliminates PERS Break in Service), House Business and Labor, March 5, 3pm, HR D

C. HB 5044 (OSAC Budget), Joint Ways and Means, Education Subcommittee, March 6, 3pm, HR F

D. HB 2180 and HB 2469 (TANF), House Human Services, March 7, 8:30 am, HR D

E. HB 2578 (Part-time/ Full-time Faculty Ratios), House Education, March 28, 1pm, HR D

The first of our community college days at the capitol will begin next week with Umpqua leading the parade on Tuesday the 6th with Clackamas taking the spotlight on Thursday March 8. We also have a date for the Student Scholar presentation in the Governor's office. It has been scheduled for April 23.