

This week at the Oregon Legislature was reminiscent of the timeless kindergarten song, "Put your right foot in, take your right foot out, do the hokey pokey and shake it all about." There was a deal and then the deal was off; a compromise and then no compromise; Senate Republicans were missing and then they were found.

All this dancing about is over the proposal to create a rainy day fund for Oregon. The compromise forged late last week that had House members thinking they had reached a bipartisan agreement included a provision to raise the exemption on estate taxes to \$2 million. The House-passed plan called for a one-time diversion of \$290 million in corporate tax. Removed from the original proposal was raising the minimum taxes paid by corporations, currently set at \$10. But while enough House Republicans voted to approve the concept, their Senate counterparts balked and left the building, taking their quorum with them. Eventually enough Senators did come back that a quorum was achieved and the bill was sent to committee.

In another move that signaled partisanship is alive and well, the Senate passed Senate Bill 426 which requires a statewide health insurance pool for education employees. Supporters claimed the health insurance pool will save districts \$50 million. Critics (including OCCA) insist it would cost a great deal more in increased benefit expenses.

Some Senate Republicans asked that SB 426 be sent back to committee to insert an amendment requiring an independent actuarial analysis. After much hemming and hawing including a description by one lawmaker that this bill is a "political grudge match" between the Oregon Education Association and the Oregon School Boards Association, which operates an existing health insurance pool, the bill was passed by the upper chamber on a straight party line vote.

The scariest thing about these demonstrations of partisanship is that they signal that the Democrats have enough votes to pass mandates to increase employee benefits since those measures only require a simple majority. Tax measures, however, require a 2/3 majority and without the support of some Republicans, the revenue measures needed to fund even the Governor's recommended budget could fall short. OCCA is continuing to work both sides of the aisles to remind legislators that business interests support investing in community colleges and that long-standing opposition to taxes don't necessarily hold true when it comes to raising revenues for us.

On a brighter note, both Umpqua Community College and Clackamas Community College celebrated their special days at the capitol. Copies of their posters are attached.

Bills we've added to watch out for this week include:

1. SB 4 (Nursing Workforce Shortage)

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/sb0001.dir/sb0004.intro.pdf>

2. SB 247 (Oregon Scholars Pilot -- Klamath CC)  
<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/sb0200.dir/sb0247.intro.pdf>
3. HJR 54 (Public Education Minimum Funding)  
<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/hjr1.dir/hjr0054.intro.pdf>
4. HB 2003 (Prescription Drug Program)  
<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/hb2000.dir/hb2003.intro.pdf>
5. HB 2842 (Products of Disabled Individuals Commission)  
<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/hb2800.dir/hb2842.intro.pdf>
6. HB 2944 (Prevailing Wage)  
<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/hb2900.dir/hb2944.intro.pdf>
7. HB 2998 (Prevailing Wage)  
<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/hb2900.dir/hb2998.intro.pdf>
8. HB 3055 (Public Contracts)  
<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/hb3000.dir/hb3055.intro.pdf>
9. HCR 6 and HCR 7 (In memoriam: Doreen Margolin)  
<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/hcr1.dir/hcr0006.intro.pdf>
10. HJR 45 (Property Taxes -- Allowable Maximum Tax)  
<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/hjr1.dir/hjr0045.intro.pdf>
11. HR 3 (Mandarin Chinese Education)  
<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/hr1.dir/hr0003.intro.pdf>
12. SB 2 (Sexual Orientation Discrimination)  
<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/sb0001.dir/sb0002.intro.pdf>
13. SB 928 (Public Interest Professional Loan Repayment Program)  
<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/sb0900.dir/sb0928.intro.pdf>

Upcoming Hearings include:

- A. HB 5044 (OSAC Budget), Ways and Means Education Subcommittee, Public Testimony, March 12, 3 pm, HR F
- B. HB 2767 (Workforce Innovation Council), House Workforce Committee, March 14, 8 am, HR C
- C. HB 2206 (Skill Up), House Workforce Committee, March 14, 8 am HR C

D. HB 2891 (Union Recognition as Exclusive Rep), House Business and Labor, March 14, 3 pm, HR D