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A NOTE FROM OUR POLICY TEAM

Dear ACLU of Oregon community,

As Oregon's 2023 legislative session comes to an end, this legislative report provides the ACLU of Oregon policy Team the opportunity to share with you the work that was accomplished during this session and what remains to be done.

[Our policy priorities during 2023](#) reflected the ACLU of Oregon's theory of change: in our effort to achieve a democracy of, by, and for all the people, we strive to center solutions that will create long-term, systemwide change, but we also recognize that when there is significant or pervasive harm, we must engage in harm reduction too.

Consistent with our theory of change, we supported several proactive legislative priorities with the purpose of creating systemic change in areas such as public defense, voting rights, and democratic representation. As well, there were bills that we engaged with extensively to prevent potential significant harm to Oregon communities – from efforts to protect abortion and gender-affirming care rights in response to the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, to bills that could hamper advocacy and protest activities of racial justice and environmental groups.

On May 3, more than three months into the legislative session and as our proactive and defensive legislative efforts were well underway, most of our state's Republican Senators decided to hold Oregonians and the legislative session hostage by refusing to show up to do their elected jobs. The Republican Senators obstructed the legislative process for seven weeks.

A NOTE FROM OUR POLICY TEAM CONTINUED

Nonetheless, Oregon Democrats held the line on fundamental protections for reproductive rights and gender-affirming care that Republicans had hoped to sabotage, negotiating a deal to protect our bottom-line priorities of abortion rights, gender-affirming care, and healthcare-provider protections while allowing the session to continue.

With very limited time remaining in the session after the Republican Senators agreed to return, legislators focused on passing the bills most critical to our communities. The bills that were adopted into law included two of our priorities — In Defense of Humanity (SB 337 and HB 2467) and Reproductive Health and Access to Care (HB 2002).

In the video linked below, my policy team colleagues, Mariana Garcia Medina and Emily Hawley, provide more information and our perspectives about what we fought for and against this session.

Thank you for taking the time to remember and reflect on the 2023 legislative long session with us.

Con aprecio,
Jessica Maravilla
ACLU Oregon Policy Director



VIDEO: See our policy team in action and hear about their approach to policy work!

PRIORITY BILL VICTORIES

SB 337 and HB 2467

In Defense of Humanity

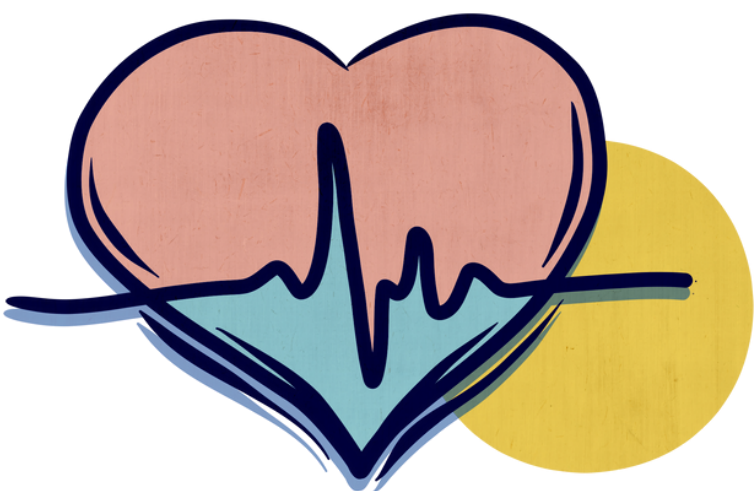
The purpose of these bills was to create shorter-term funding solutions and longer-term structural changes to Oregon's public defense system so that our state can meet its constitutional responsibility of providing an attorney to any Oregonian accused of a crime who cannot afford one. SB 337 passed this session, although HB 2467 didn't make it out of the Ways and Means Committee. Under SB 337, the state's investment of \$96 million is a step in the right direction to improve our public defense system.



HB 2002

Reproductive Health and Access to Care

This bill reflected Oregon's continuing leadership in protecting bodily autonomy with abortion, reproductive health, and gender-affirming care rights, as well as our commitment to protecting health care providers who provide essential health care. After passing the House floor, HB 2002 was one of the bills that Senate Republicans blocked by abandoning the Senate floor. After negotiated changes to the bill - with Democrats preserving its most critical provisions - the bill passed and went to the Governor's desk to be signed into law. The passage of HB 2002 is a victory for bodily and life autonomy, freedom, and equality.



UNFINISHED BUSINESS

SB 579

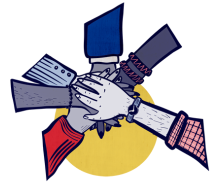
Guaranteeing the Right to Vote



This bill continued efforts from multiple prior legislative sessions to return voting rights to currently incarcerated individuals in order to strengthen and more fully realize our democracy by aligning with Oregon's rich tradition of making voting as inclusive and accessible as possible. Unfortunately, after the legislative session was obstructed, SB 579 was unable to make it out of the Ways and Means committee and continue its progress. We will continue fighting to restore the voting rights of our incarcerated community.

SB 786

The Opportunity to Serve



This bill continued efforts from the 2022 legislative session to raise the pay of our state legislators, who are amongst the lowest paid across the US. The goal of this bill was to improve the quality and diversity of representation in the Capitol and support the full-time commitment that legislators make to their constituents. Our efforts led to the passage of a bipartisan ballot measure referral via SJR 34, which if adopted by voters will create a compensation commission to analyze the pay of elected officials. The coalition we worked with did not see this as the most effective policy solution. Nonetheless, we look forward to learning how leadership will invest in public awareness to ensure that voters understand how a compensation commission can increase both legislative pay and the quality and diversity of elected leaders.

SJR 33

The Equal Rights for All Constitutional Amendment

The purpose of this bill was for legislators to refer a measure to the November 2024 ballot so that Oregon voters could adopt language into our state Constitution making it clear that its Equal Rights provision protects sex, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation, including abortion and reproductive health rights, gender-affirming care, and same-gender marriage. Republicans successfully eliminated SJR 33 during the Legislature's leadership negotiations to get Republican Senators back to session. This was a significant loss during this session. We and our partner organizations — Basic Rights Oregon and Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon — will continue the fight for these constitutional protections.

BILLS WE SUPPORTED

in collaboration with partners, communities and legislators that passed this session

WE SUPPORTED OUR PARTNERS ON THE FOLLOWING BILLS:

HB 2001

Eviction Reform

Governor signed, effective March 20, 2023

HB 2004

Ranked Choice Voting

Passed, in Governor's office — awaiting signature

HB 2513

Strengthening and improving Measure 110

Passed, in Governor's office — awaiting signature

HB 2990

Community Resilience Hubs

Passed, in Governor's office — awaiting signature

HB 3201

Broadband Bill

Passed, in Governor's office — awaiting signature

HB 3232

Kicker Reform

Passed, in Governor's office — awaiting signature

SB 488

Increasing Reporting Requirements of the Cavanta Waste Incinerator

Passed, in Governor's office — awaiting signature

SB 581

Earned Discharge

Governor signed, effective January 1, 2024

SB 611

Reasonable Rent Limits

Passed, in Governor's office — awaiting signature

DEMOCRACY STALLED

The 2023 session showed, once again, that Oregon's atypical quorum rules are obstacles to important public policies supported by the majority of Oregonians.

In Oregon, legislators of both parties have utilized our state's atypical quorum rules and blocked policies by refusing to show up to legislative session. During the past five years, Republican legislators have repeatedly used this tactic to block an array of important public policies supported by the majority of Oregonians. When politicians obstruct democracy with technical games playing, our communities suffer. We need CHANGE.

HISTORY OF LEGISLATORS REFUSING TO SHOW UP AND MEET QUORUM FROM 2001 TO 2023:

2001

Democratic legislators refused to show up to the legislative session for five days to block a resolution on redistricting.

2007

Republican legislators refused to show up to the legislative session for one day to block a tax-related bill.

2019

Republican legislators refused to show up to the legislative session for seven days to block an education funding bill.

2019

Republican legislators refused to show up to the legislative session for nine days to block climate change legislation.

2023

Republican legislators refused to show up to the legislative session for seven weeks to block bills on abortion and gender-affirming care and gun safety.

2021

Republican legislators refused to show up to legislative session for two days to block a redistricting bill.

2021

Republican legislators refused to show up to legislative session for five days to block COVID-19 regulations.

2020

Republican legislators refused to show up to legislative session for four days to block climate change legislation.

MORE ABOUT HB 2002

No one should be denied life-saving health care or be forced to carry a pregnancy against their will and face the life-altering consequences of being denied essential care. The ACLU of Oregon works to ensure that every person can make the best decisions for their own body, health, and life without undue political interference.

HB 2002 was designed to address gaps that legislative work groups identified after *Roe v. Wade* was overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court. Its provisions strengthened protections and expanded access to abortion, reproductive and gender-affirming health care, while also strengthening protections for health care providers against harassment for providing essential services. These are policies supported by the overwhelming majority of Oregonians.

The bill was passed out of the Oregon House on May 1 with bipartisan support. This [article](#) shares how Republican Representative Charlie Conrad changed his mind and voted for HB 2002 after learning more about the bill and talking to health care providers and impacted community members.

Although parts of the bill had to be changed during negotiations, its most essential provisions were passed by the legislature. The passage of HB 2002 is a victory for bodily and life autonomy, freedom, and equality.

MORE ABOUT SJR 33

Staying focused on constitutional protections for bodily autonomy

At the ACLU of Oregon, we believe that all people should have the rights and freedoms to marry who we love and access the essential health care we need to live and thrive without undue political control, interference or discrimination. The Equal Rights for All Campaign was launched during the session. SJR 33, a ballot referral, would have allowed Oregon voters to enshrine vital protections for abortion access, gender-affirming care, and the right to marry who we love into our state constitution.

SJR 33 was one of the most significant losses in negotiations to bring Republicans back to the Senate, showing us once again that ultra-conservative legislators in our own state are willing to stop at nothing to rollback abortion, reproductive, and LGBTQ+ rights — which are fundamental freedoms for all Oregonians.

But we aren't giving up. Following last year's overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, Oregonians know that we can't rely on the U.S. Supreme Court to protect our core freedoms. ACLU-OR and our partner organizations are prepared to organize and mobilize Oregonians — to use people power to get SJR 33 on the ballot. Please look out for future action steps from us!

PROTECTING OUR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO PROTEST

During this legislative session, the ACLU of Oregon policy team worked hard to educate legislators and community members about the potential significant and negative impacts of multiple proposed bills on the fundamental constitutional right to protest.

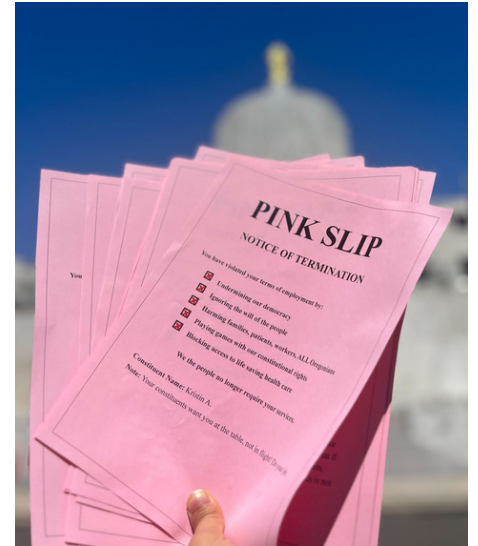
One such bill was [HB 2572](#), a bill with the goal of preventing armed activity that interferes with law enforcement or infringes on a person's constitutional rights such as voting. As initially written, the bill contained provisions that could potentially result in criminalization and penalization of constitutionally protected protest rights. Legislators, led by Representative Dacia Grayber, the chief sponsor of the bill, engaged with the ACLU of Oregon and modified the bill language to address our central concerns, which resulted in our team taking a neutral position on this bill. We are grateful to Rep. Grayber for her collaboration and openness to listening to community.

Another bill was [SB 614](#), the purpose of which was to permit law enforcement agencies to collect and maintain information about a person's political, religious or social views or activities. This bill was requested by the City of Portland. We were able to collaborate with the City of Portland Attorney's Office and reached an amicable agreement for this bill to not move forward. We are grateful to City Attorney Robert Taylor for his collaboration and commitment to protecting important civil liberties..

A third bill was [HB 2772](#), whose chief sponsor is Representative Paul Evans. As written, this bill would allow law enforcement to potentially treat protest activities on or near a wide array of structures — including ordinary roads and bridges — as potential terrorism. We are concerned that this continues the alarming trend of treating local police as militarized forces who suppress constitutionally-protected First Amendment activity. Despite an extensive [memo](#) to legislators explaining concerns and outreach from community members who sent thousands of emails to legislators opposing this bill, it was passed by the legislature. We are continuing to oppose the bill.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



This was the first legislative session held in person since COVID-19. We were thrilled to have opportunities to meet and engage with community members both virtually and in person. Thank you to advocates who logged onto Zoom calls to testify virtually and attend lobby day meetings. Thank you to community members who gathered to rally at the State Capitol and in key districts. It felt so energizing to build power together!

4,000+

Messages sent to
legislators

1,000+

Pink slips delivered to
Republican Senators

50+

Partner organizations
collaborated with

500+

Community members at
advocacy events

82

Lobby Day registrants

20

Lobby Day meetings
with legislators

WHAT'S COMING UP NEXT?



SCAN to sign up for
our mailing list to
stay up-to-date!

STAY TUNED

The 2024 legislative session will be here before we know it. We will start setting priorities this fall.

YOU CAN HELP —

Please complete [this survey](#) and let us know what Oregon issues are most important to you so that we can incorporate community input in our policy planning. Your voice matters!



YOUR SUPPORT MAKES AN IMPACT

Every time we submit testimony on a bill, we proudly open with:

“

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon.

The ACLU of Oregon is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and enhancing civil liberties and civil rights, with more than 27,000 supporters statewide.

”

Join or renew your annual membership to be a part of this powerful number!

THANK YOU FOR ENGAGING IN AND SUSTAINING THE MOVEMENT FOR A MORE JUST, EQUITABLE AND CARING OREGON.



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SCAN TO JOIN!

Or go to
<https://tinyurl.com/joinacluor>

