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Lawmakers prepare for February session

Posted By [Sarah Ross](#) On January 15, 2012 @ 6:32 pm In [Featured 1](#), [Governor](#), [Legislature](#), [State House](#), [State Senate](#) | [1 Comment](#)

By SARAH ROSS ^[1]

SALEM, Ore.- Lawmakers will gather in the state capitol next week to prepare for their first official interim session.

The legislators' biannual February meeting in even years became official last year when voters approved a brief 35-day session to occur between years with regular-length legislative sessions.

Lawmakers will meet for three days next week, hearing mostly informational sessions, in preparation for their upcoming February session. They have until [January 23](#) ^[2] to file official bills with the respective chamber leaders. However, they had to submit their proposals to legislative council earlier this month so that the ideas could be drafted into legal language. Each member of the House may file two bills. Other bills may be introduced by committees once the session has started.

Leaders of the House have been saying for weeks that they will focus on the budget deficit the state will face in this and the next fiscal biennium. Lawmakers were notified in November that the state revenue projections last year were \$300 million below what lawmakers had expected when they finished the legislative budget for 2011-2013.

Legislators will receive an updated revenue forecast on February 9 while in session.

In his State of the State address Friday afternoon at the Portland City Club, Governor John Kitzhaber asked legislators to move forward with his proposals for education and health care.

To save money for long-term funding of the Oregon Health Plan, Kitzhaber asked for full implementation of the Oregon Health Insurance Exchange and Coordinated Care organizations.

Coordinate care organizations, he said, would focus on preventative care aimed at keeping patients healthy.

The governor said with confidence that federal leaders would invest "significant" dollars in this health care transformation in Oregon.

For education, Kitzhaber will propose legislation to ensure school accountability and student success, measures which would allow Oregon to opt out of the Federal No Child Left Behind Act. One of these proposals would give authority to the recently created Oregon Education Investment Board, a panel chaired by the governor, to enter into "achievement compacts" which would connect funding to measurable outcomes.



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[1] Image: <http://oregoncapitolnews.com/files/2010/02/capitol.b.jpg>

[2] January 23: http://www.leg.state.or.us/bills_laws/February2012Calendar.pdf