

# Dr. Alan Bates

Oregon Senate Majority Whip

Issue: 4

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## House Calls Newsletter with Senator Alan Bates

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Dear Friend,

Welcome back to another House Calls newsletter! It has been a busy couple of week and my staff and I have been working hard on several bills and projects. I've just concluded a tour of the state with the rest of the Joint Ways and Means committee. We held town hall meetings regarding proposed budget cuts. There are several bills that I wanted to mention that are in the works including SB 451, SB 452 and SB 316. Other topics on the agenda are the remaining legislative schedule for measure hearings and the projected end date for session. My staff and I would also like to mention the hard work of our interns and bid them a fond farewell as their school year is coming to a close. Last, but certainly not least, I would like to remind you of the newest section of the newsletter that was introduced last issue, which contains helpful links to websites for constituent-related concerns.

### Joint Ways and Means Tour

The Joint Ways and Means committee tour stopped in Ashland on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Thank you to all who attended. There was a great showing, with over 500 people in attendance. As we proceed on budget cuts everything will be taken into consideration and it is important to hear from you about what is important. For a full article on the committee meeting visit the [Mail Tribune](#).

### Bill Updates



### **Senate Bill 451**

In this bill, the Department of Human Services would establish and operate a statewide registry, through Oregon Health Systems, for the collection and dissemination of physician orders for life-sustaining treatment (POLST). A POLST is a commonly used tool for individuals to communicate the extent of medical treatment they wish to receive as they near the end of their lives. However, the appropriate documentation of a patient's preference is often not transferred across different care settings or is unavailable at the patient's time of need. This bill will help health care providers to honor patients' wishes.

### **Senate Bill 452**

Senate Bill 452 establishes a Health Information Technology (HIT) Oversight Council within the Department of Human Services to support the accelerated adoption of health information technology and the development of a statewide system for electronic health information exchange. Research shows that more widespread use of HIT has the potential to improve health system efficiency, safety and performance; reduce duplicative or unnecessary care; strengthen disease management efforts, and improve care coordination.

### **Senate Bill 316**

This bill would expand a patient's access to clinical trials by requiring insurance companies to cover routine care for patients participating in FDA approved clinical trials. Currently, some insurance policies exclude the costs of routine care procedures, like blood work, x-rays and basic tests of patients connected to clinical trials, because they are "experimental," even though these same tests would be performed whether the patient was in a trial or not.

## **Session Schedule**

This session has just been flying by. We are well over half way through the session and have just passed the final deadline for measures to be considered in their chamber of origin this past week. I thought it might be helpful to explain the legislature's timeline and what we

have left to accomplish before the end of the session.

The next deadline we are approaching is May 20<sup>th</sup> and by this time all measures must be scheduled for work sessions in their second chamber. From this time on legislators will be reviewing the other chamber's measures and beginning to pass or deny bills. On May 28<sup>th</sup>, most committees will close (except for Joint Ways & Means, Senate Finance & Revenue, House revenue, Senate & House Rules). From this point on the chambers will be voting on the measures to pass them into law. The projected completion of this biennium's session is June 30<sup>th</sup>; however the adjournment (*sine die*) is not definite and will be ultimately determined by the progress of the chambers.

*NEXT ISSUE: Explanation of Sine Die*

## **Health Care Reform: Controlling Costs and Improving Care**

Dr. Michael O'Holleran of OHSU and I sat down with Laural Porter on KGW's "Straight Talk" to discuss health care reform.

Watch the video segment at [KGW.com](http://KGW.com).

## **Intern Farewell**



*Back row: Aaron Smith, Byron Harmon, Sen. Bates, Samantha Post.  
Front row: Kristofer Smiley and Lauren Cheek.*

As the session is well on its way, the school year is at its end. This means the interns who have spent their spring academic term working in my office will be heading off to summer vacation. Each one focused on a specific area and became very proficient in their duties. I'd like to take this

opportunity to thank them for their hard work.

*Lauren Cheek* was my youngest intern. She worked hard scanning hundreds of business cards into our address book, which significantly expanded our community outreach.

*Byron Harmon* did the bulk of the office's measure tracking, keeping me up-to-date on the status of current measures.

*Kristofer Smiley* worked directly with constituents and prepared issue statements to address their concerns.

*Aaron Smith* assisted my policy advisor with legal research on tort reform, prescription monitoring, navigability, transportation and a variety of other issues.

*Samantha Post* was the communications intern in charge of publishing this monthly newsletter, updating the website's content and developing press releases to send out to the media.

If you think you would enjoy working at the capitol for a legislator check out the legislative website for the internship program by [clicking here](#).

## For Your Information

H1N1 influenza (Swine Flu) is a respiratory illness related to seasonal influenza, but not usually seen in people. None of the ill are known to have been in contact with pigs, which is the most common route of exposure for humans. This suggests that transmission may have been from person to person. CDC and state health departments are working together to learn more about the infection, and whether other people in contact with those who were ill may have also experienced infection.

For more information visit these websites:

Oregon Department of Human Services Information  
<http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/acd/flu/swineflu.shtml>

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention Information  
[http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/general\\_info.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/general_info.htm)

*Oregon Scam Alert Network:* Attorney General John Kroger is warning about identity thieves using the swine flu outbreak to scam consumers. Scam emails may include links to bogus health Web sites that seek to obtain private financial information that identity thieves can use to rip off consumers. The email scams may also include viruses.

To receive scam alerts directly sign up at the Department of Justice's [website](#).

## **Listening to Our Community**

It is only with your input that I can continue to advocate for the needs of our communities. Please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions, comments, or requests for assistance. As always, my staff and I are eager to help in any way we can.

In Salem:

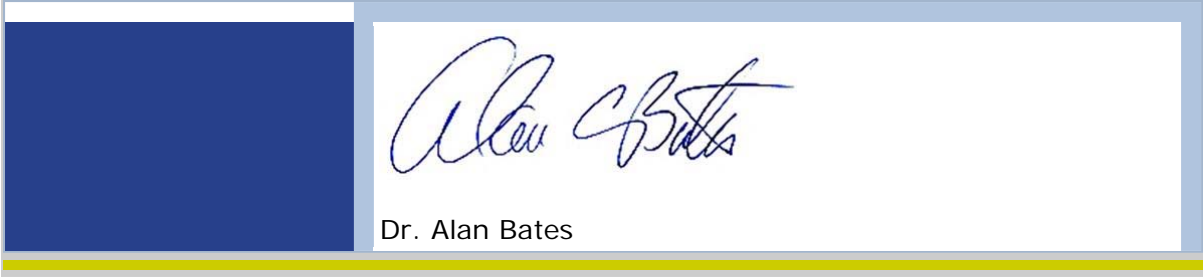
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Dr. Alan Bates

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