



Representative Phil Barnhart (HD-11)

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

April 6, 2005

Contact: Jacquelyn Jeys, 503.986.1411

Barnhart fights tax giveaway to out-of-state companies

Republican bill pads profits of drug makers, insurance companies, oil companies

SALEM—Assistant House Democratic Leader Phil Barnhart (D-Eugene) fought a Republican bill to give away \$27 million in tax breaks to big out-of-state corporations, but the majority Republicans held the line on a vote of 37-23 on Wednesday.

Barnhart said the bill, HB 2542, hurts children and seniors by reducing the state's ability to pay for schools and programs to help seniors.

"I've been proud to stand with the rest of my Democratic colleagues in the House, fighting for a school budget that finally puts a stop to the devastating cuts they've endured over the last decade," Barnhart said. "What disheartens me is the House leadership's response to our call for a \$5.4-billion school budget. The majority continues to mislead Oregonians by saying that in order to hold our schools harmless, we must cut programs for seniors' or public safety. They give the false impression that we must choose between our seniors and our kids."

Barnhart said the HB 2542 exposes the "blatant falsehood" of the Republicans' positions on schools, seniors and taxes, and shows where their priorities are. "Their priorities are not with school children," Barnhart said. "Their priorities are not with seniors and not with public safety. Their priorities are with big, out-of-state corporations, and that's just plain wrong for schools, wrong for seniors, wrong for public safety, and wrong for Oregon."

Barnhart said that the Legislature need not choose between seniors and kids. "We need not choose between kids and public safety," Barnhart said. "What we must do, however, is choose those with whom we stand, and this bill, HB 2542, presents that choice in no uncertain terms."

Does the Legislature stand with out-of-state corporations, or does it stand with children, Barnhart asked his colleagues.

“Do we stand with the most powerful special interests who lobby this Legislature so powerfully, or do we stand with the least powerful—the people who have little or no ability to lobby? Do we stand with greedy insurance companies, or do we stand with our seniors?” Barnhart asked.

“For more than a decade, the House Republican leadership has made Oregonians believe they must choose between health care for seniors or schools for our kids,” Barnhart said. “At the same time, that leadership has given away hundreds millions of dollars to the largest, most profitable out-of-state corporations—the same ones who are the primary beneficiaries of HB 2542.”

-30-

Lonn Hoklin
Media Director
House Democratic Office
Oregon House of Representatives
503.986.1904