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NEWS RELEASE

March 6, 2014

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Democrats turn closing days of session into chaos and partisanship

Salem, OR – Senate Democrat leaders forced a polarizing and controversial bill to the Senate floor on Thursday morning, despite bipartisan opposition and numerous compromise proposals. The action of Senate Democrat leaders has jeopardized the cooperative spirit and bipartisan reputation of Oregon's upper chamber.

"This is clearly political positioning," said Senate Republican Leader Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day). "Over the past eighteen months Republicans and Democrats have worked hard to reach consensus-based solutions to some of the most difficult issues our state faces. But in one day, Democrat leadership has done significant damage to those months of careful bipartisanship and hard work."

Senate Republicans warned President Courtney (D-Salem) that if his caucus insists on making the last week of session about political posturing, Republicans can and will respond with procedural motions that bring good legislation abandoned by Democrats to the Senate floor.

"Republicans want to close out the 2014 session in the same spirit of cooperation that brought such success in 2013," said Ferrioli. "But Democrats want to make this a game of 'who can embarrass the other party more.'"

Despite repeated warnings that it would fail on the Senate floor and numerous Republican offers to reach a compromise, Senate Democrat leaders insisted on forcing a vote on House Bill 4143 on Tuesday. After a bitter floor fight, the bill failed with a bipartisan coalition of Senators opposing the legislation.

The bill, which purported to fund Legal Aid, would do little to fix the four years of cuts to Legal Aid enacted by a Democrat majority. Republicans proposed a \$2 million general fund appropriation to help provide legal services for the poor, but Democrats refused.

House Bill 4143 would have given trial lawyers, major Democrat campaign supporters, a substantial pay day thanks to increased attorney fees.

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