

From the Desk of Senator Ted Ferrioli

Senate District 30



Friends,

As I recall, Oregonians were sold on the idea of annual meetings with the promise that the "short" session would focus on balancing the budget, making small legislative "fixes," often referred to as "housekeeping measures," and responding to emergencies that need immediate attention from the Legislature.

I'm sorry to report that the "short session" has become little more than a setting for the Majority Party to pursue an over-reaching agenda of tax increases, regulation, and ideological issues dear to the Progressives who rule Portland and to a great extent, the rest of Oregon.

Democrats have proposed an increase in the minimum wage from the current level of \$9.25 to as much as \$15.00 per hour in the Metro area, and \$13.50 elsewhere in Oregon. This proposal comes on the heels of mandatory paid sick leave, and together they threaten to raise overheads to such a degree that the result will likely be layoffs and business closures across the state.

The minimum wage increase will fall particularly hard on rural communities close to Idaho and Nevada, which have much lower labor costs and much more robust economies. The Governor, Speaker, and Senate President favor this proposal, leaving House and Senate Republicans opposed to the plan and fighting for the survival of small business in Oregon.

Democrats are also proposing a "Cap and Trade" mandate that will raise energy costs for everyone including businesses and families, disproportionately hitting the poor, elderly, school districts and those on fixed incomes.

This concept puts the state government in charge of the fuel and energy costs,

unfairly benefits alternative energy suppliers at the expense of consumers and traditional energy businesses, all with little or no measurable effects on carbon emissions, reduction of global warming or reducing the size of Oregon's miniscule carbon footprint.

In addition to these anti-business measures, Democrats are proposing a mandate for affordable housing that will force construction contractors to build a certain amount of below-cost housing units for people of limited means, to be paid for by higher costs passed on to more traditional home buyers.

Democrats also propose to modify constitutional, voter-approved limitations on property taxes by changing the system from one based on assessed valuation to a system based on floating real market value. The changes would also allow local governments to increase the maximum constitutional caps through a voter-approved local option levy. These changes will raise local property taxes and further increase the cost of housing for Oregon families and fixed-income seniors.

Democrats are also working on a proposal that would remove an individual's right to buy firearms based on a report that they pose a "danger to themselves or others." The report can be anonymous and will not be checked for validity or accuracy. A 30 day "hold" will be put on the accused so they would fail firearms background checks. The accused will not be notified of the hold, and would only learn of the restriction if they tried to purchase a firearm. The "hold" could only be removed upon the report of a medical professional refuting the allegations, or by a court order lifting the "hold." However, a new report could be filed every 30 days.

Oregon has many pressing problems like the unfunded PERS obligations. PERS premiums will increase by as much as 30 percent in 2016-17.

The Oregon Health Plan added more than 250,000 new enrollees since its inception, and health care costs are still spiraling out of control with no plan for sustaining vital programs.

Our schools have become a laughingstock with some of the worst attendance records and lowest graduation rates in the Nation.

Against a backdrop of plunging stock market values, stagnation in major economic sectors and disruptions in our global shipping infrastructure, the Governor has granted generous pay increases to state employees and will likely support massive tax increases to cover burgeoning state expenses.

Worst of all, the "short session" will provide little or no opportunity for citizens to personally engage in issues as public hearings will be limited largely to "invited testimony" and in most cases, held with a one hour notice before action on bills, most of which will have an "emergency clause" that prevents a citizen referral to voters.

I don't believe most Oregonians envisioned this type of governance when they approved annual session and I don't believe they support the way public participation is being squelched.

For a look at a much more positive agenda, please check our [website](#).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ted Ferrioli". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "T".

Senator Ted Ferrioli

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