Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The 2013 legislative session has adjourned. This session, I was assigned Chair of the Consumer Protection and Government Efficiency committee, as well as serving on the Business and Labor, Land Use, and Rules committees. I have included in this newsletter information that I hope will give you an idea of what we accomplished during the 77th Legislative Session. Additionally, I have included brief descriptions of some of the bills I have introduced and their outcomes.

In addition to advocating for policy and legislation that reflects our values, one of my primary responsibilities as your state representative is to help my constituents navigate the state system and help you address concerns or disputes with state agencies. Please do not hesitate to contact my office at (503) 968-1408 or rep.paulholvey@state.or.us if I can be of any assistance with these matters.

Respectfully,

Paul Holvey

**Environmental Protection and Food Safety**

As Oregonians, we care about the health of our environment and our bodies, and we are national leaders in addressing issues surrounding these concerns. That is why I introduced legislation aimed at protecting the health and safety of our environment, the food we eat and grow, and the products we keep in our homes. If Oregon is to prosper, it is essential that we protect Oregon consumers against threats to these components of our lives.

**HB 2530** – This bill, recently given a public hearing on March 21st in the House Agricultural and Natural Resources Committee, would ban the raising, selling, importation, or owning of genetically modified fish in the state. There is significant concern around the impact the introduction of these fish could have on Oregon’s waterways and native aquaculture industries; and because of this, it is important that we not take chances these incredibly important natural resources.

**HB 2427** – I have heard a great deal from my constituents about their concerns over the growing of canola in Willamette Valley. This bill, which I am co-sponsoring, is currently in the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on in the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee on the 15th of April. I fully support this legislation and believe we must ban this practice that threatens our farming and organic seed industries.

**HB 2532** – Oregonians are discerning consumers, particularly when it comes to food, and they deserve to know whether or not that food has been genetically modified. I have introduced this bill which would require food manufacturers to label the products that are made from genetically modified crops. This bill will also face a work session on the 15th of April.

**HB 2937** – There are currently no labeling requirements for the ingredients of household cleaning products. This bill, currently awaiting hearing in the House Committee on Health Care, would require manufacturers to list all of the ingredients in their products, so consumers can decide to keep potentially hazardous substances out of their homes.

**HB 2928** – Presently, to ban harmful or toxic compounds, legislation specific to those compounds must be written. This bill, also before the Health Care Committee and slated for a work session on the 15th of April, would allow DHS to review individual toxic compounds, regulate their usage, and potentially ban them by rule.

**Health Care Transformation**

Our state will soon see a great deal of change with the way we handle health care, and the eyes of the nation will be on us as we go through with these changes. Oregon will be a pioneer in expanding access to care nationwide. Next year, we will see the statewide implementation of Coordinated Care Organizations, or networks of local health and medical care providers. These local networks will increase Oregonian’s access to affordable care and preventative treatment options, with the aim of reducing the need for costly emergency room visits. These CCO’s have better results managing patients with ongoing health problems or chronic pain issues, and allows people to receive the services they need to maintain a high quality of life affordably. Next year, we will also see the implementation of our Health Insurance Exchange, which will create a statewide marketplace for people who otherwise may not be able to afford coverage to find cost-effective health insurance options.

We are also working hard to promote healthy choices and options for our children, especially with regards to nutrition. I am proudly cosponsored a bill to allow the Oregon Health Authority to operate Farm Direct Nutrition programs, which would provide fresh, local produce to low-income people, seniors, and children (HB 2992 – signed into law by the Governor on May 13th). Programs like this pay dividends back into our community and into our economy, increase the overall healthfulness of our citizens, and reduce the need for costly medical treatment.

With our innovative approach, we are positioned to be a nationwide leader in health care by expanding availability to a record number of people, increasing the quality of care, and cutting long-term healthcare spending.

If you are one of the 650,000 Oregonians currently receiving Medicare benefits, be aware that you may be eligible for assistance in navigating your healthcare choices through Oregon’s Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance (SHIBA). With its team of volunteers, SHIBA can help beneficiaries understand their insurance choices, as well as enrollment help and how to appeal Medicare decisions. Feel free to contact them at 1-800-722-4134, online at [www.oregonshiba.org](http://www.oregonshiba.org) or at [www.medicarestartsat65.org](http://www.medicarestartsat65.org), or by email at shiba.oregon@state.or.us

**Worker and Employment Protection**

Workers are the bedrock of Oregon’s economy, and if it is to thrive, it is important that we put measures in place to protect their rights. This session, I have introduced a group of bills that are intended to ensure workplace and employment protections, which will provide greater protections for employees and ensure that employers and businesses are acting in a fair and honest way

**HB2535** – Following the recent recession, temporary employment has become much more commonplace. There is no reason these workers should be treated differently solely because of the ephemeral nature of their work. This bill, up for a work session in the Business and Labor Committee on April 15th, would require temporary employment agencies to provide worker’s compensation insurance for temporary employees, so they will be covered if they sustain a work-related injury.

**HB2540** – Allows the Construction Contractors Board to deny, revoke, or suspend the license of any contractor who has violated the board’s rules or engaged in dishonest business practices with regards to their employees. This helps to maintain fairness in this industry that the board has fought to secure for decades. The bill will be given a work session in the Business and Labor Committee on the 15th of April.

**HB2529** – Taxi drivers often work long, challenging hours and deserve the same benefits afforded other professions, particularly unemployment insurance. This bill would extend unemployment insurance to taxi drivers so they receive benefits should they find themselves out of work for a period of time. The bill is currently before the Business and Labor Committee.

**HB2545** – Allows the Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries to debar from public works projects any contractors that fail to pay any employees or subcontractor’s employees, fail to post prevailing rate of wage, or that falsify any information on certified statements. This bill is currently before the Senate Committee on Business and Transportation.

**Strengthening Protections for Homeowners and Consumers**

Oregon is still recovering from the economic downturn of 2008, and many homeowners still need additional protection from foreclosure and predatory lending practices. As of last December, 2.7% of Oregonians are at some stage of the foreclosure process. Several of the pieces of legislation I am submitting this session aim to ensure that Oregon consumers are not taken advantage of, and to promote fairness in our banking, financial, and real estate industries.

**HB2526** – This toughens the requirements for a debt buyer to bring action against the person who owes; failure to meet these practices would be considered unlawful collection, and there is an increased statutory damage available. This bill is currently awaiting hearing in the Consumer Protection and Government Efficiency Committee.

**HB2525** – Allows for class action lawsuits for the victims of unlawful insurance practices, increases the stature of limitations for these cases to two years, and allows the Attorney General to punish these cases under unlawful trade practices law. This bill was given a public hearing on March 14th in the Consumer Protection and Government Efficiency Committee.

**HB2527** – This bill requires sellers to fully disclose the monetary value and a description of any other property or asset offered as a concession by the seller prior to sale. A public hearing for this bill was held on the 5th of March before the Consumer Protection and Government Efficiency Committee.

**HB2821** – I am pleased to announce that this bill, which requires insurers to pay the full coverage of their policy to those injured in cases of personal injury protection, passed the House on April 10th. It now goes to the Senate, where, if it passes, it will ensure that consumers are afforded the full protection of the insurance policies that they pay for.

**Growing Revenue and Economic Development**

For many years, our state’s budget has been badly starved for revenue. This has led to massive funding cuts for our schools, and has greatly reduced many vital services for communities across the state. As evidenced by the mild net increase of $87 million in our revenue forecast for the upcoming biennium, our state is on a slow but steady path toward economic recovery. To build a solid foundation for future economic growth and success, we must develop and maintain new, reliable sources of revenue. One of the bills I am working on would, if passed, implement a statewide 5% sales tax - including provisions and credits to ensure that the economic impact would not disproportionately harm lower-income families - with all revenue dedicated to funding our public schools. I am also working on a piece of legislation that would allow for more tax revenues to be generated from our timber and forest products (HB2555) – including special tax credits for those products milled right here in Oregon.

Access to capital is critically important for small businesses to expand, and vital for economic development of the state. During the recession, many of our state’s businesses required state or federal assistance to access capital. That is why last session I worked to help expand the Credit Enhancement Fund to guarantee some small, non-traded sector projects with federal funds. These projects benefitted their communities and helped boost economic development in some rural parts of the state. In 2012, the number of projects guaranteed under this fund increased 25% from the year before, and the total loan amount went from $19 million in 2011 to over $30 million in 2012. This expansion directly resulted in the creation of over 200 jobs here in Oregon, and the retention of hundreds more.

In order to successfully position our state for future economic growth, we must make sure that we are training our workforce with the skills they need to thrive in tomorrow’s economy. That’s why I have introduced a bill to establish a State Apprenticeship Education and Training Fund. Robust apprenticeship programs allow for many avenues toward employment for a broad range of Oregonians, and allow people from all economic backgrounds to learn a trade and make a living wage job. With a dynamic and considered approach, we can reinvest in our state’s future by providing higher quality educational and employment opportunities for our children without placing an undue burden on working families and small businesses.

**CITIZEN’S UNITED**

I have also heard concerns from many of my constituents about the Citizen’s United Supreme Court ruling, as well as concerns about corporate personhood and limiting campaign spending. I agree that statutory entities should not have the same constitutional rights as individuals, and that money raised and spent for political purposes should be subject to reasonable regulation.

While this is an issue that needs to be resolved by our federal government, there are steps that we can take here in the state of Oregon to make sure our federal representatives hear our voice loud and clear. HJM 6 is a bill that would formally urge Congress to propose a constitutional amendment to limit certain political contributions. The bill is currently in the House Committee on Rules, where it had a public hearing on April 10th. This is a message that we must send to Congress, which is why I am a chief sponsor of this bill.