



Oregon House Republican Caucus
Oregon Opportunities
February 2014 Legislative Session

Oregonians are innovative, hard-working, and self-reliant. Oregon's government should encourage this by providing certainty, incentives and removing obstacles to success. Our businesses, schools, students and citizens will succeed if government does not stifle the resolve inside every Oregonian.

Economic Revitalization for Oregon's Unemployed

Economic growth, while improving, is slow, especially in rural Oregon. We need to provide entrepreneurs and businesses with certainty so they can confidently expand and reinvest in creating jobs.

- **Save Energy, Save Money for Schools:** Saving money on energy means more money for teachers and students. Oregon House Republicans want to upgrade Oregon's schools for energy efficiency, provide jobs and a cutting-edge environmental education for our students by redirecting 30 percent of the money from the Energy Trust of Oregon¹ to energy efficiency projects in local schools.
- **Industrial Fast-Track For Rural Oregon:** Economic recovery remains slow in Oregon's rural areas.² To attract and retain the growth in a variety of industries, Oregon needs more shovel-ready industrial land. To help rural Oregon attract large employers with family-wage jobs, it needs flexibility in our land use system to expedite siting for industrial projects.
- **21st Century Access For All Oregon:** Oregon also needs to continue to find ways to improve technology infrastructure in our rural counties and towns. Oregon House Republicans support utilizing state projects to simultaneously upgrade technology infrastructure.

Educational Excellence for Oregon's Students

We must encourage Oregon's best and brightest to get degrees, stay in Oregon, and fill the over 32,000 open jobs in Oregon, many in science, technology, and engineering.

- **College Grad Tax Relief:** Student loan debt is an anchor around the necks of new graduates. Oregon House Republicans want to provide new Oregon grads that stay in Oregon a subtraction on their income taxes for student loan interest payments. In addition, Oregon's high tech firms have the jobs, we just need to prepare Oregon's brightest to pursue them. Oregon House Republicans propose additional tax relief on student loan interest for STEM graduates of Oregon schools who work in-state. We must encourage Oregon's best and brightest to get degrees, stay in Oregon, and fill over 32,000 open jobs in the state.

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¹ Total actual annual revenues to Energy Trust of Oregon in 2012 was \$144,844,553
http://energytrust.org/library/reports/2012_ETO_Annual_Report_OPUC1.PDF

² For example, Oregon unemployment was 8.4% in November 2013, while Coos, Jackson and Deschutes counties were at 10.5% each. <http://www.qualityinfo.org/olmisj/AllRates>



Effective Safety Net for Oregon Families

Protecting Oregon's vulnerable populations and providing an effective safety net for those in need are top priorities. Hundreds of thousands of Oregonians are out of work or on food stamps. Preventing fraud and abuse already identified in state audits is a tangible first step.

- **Stop Food Stamp Fraud:** We must ensure money is going to help those in need and not being stolen via fraud. The 2013 audit by the Secretary of State identified multiple problems.³ Requiring Photo ID on Oregon Trail Cards is a first step toward making sure food assistance is being used only by those in need. In 2013, House Republicans supported HB 3252 to achieve this goal.
- **Protect Oregon's Seniors:** According to a state study, the number of alleged financial abuses reported by the elderly and disabled increased 33 percent between 2009 and 2012. We need to improve recordkeeping to facilitate better tracking and identification of elder abuse problems and potential problems.
- **Promoting A Healthy Oregon:** Oregon House Republicans support creating an incentive for Oregon's employers to encourage their employees to get healthy. Our legislation would create a subtraction for employees who receive incentive payments from their employers which offset the costs of wellness and fitness programs, weight control programs, nutrition programs, and plans to help people quit smoking.

Efficiency in Government for Oregon Taxpayers

State audits and independent consultants have identified thousands of inefficiencies in Oregon's government. With the Oregon all-funds budget double its size of just 12 years ago, we need to ensure Oregon's agencies are operating more efficiently.

- **Accountability and Efficiency in IT Projects:** Oregon's track record on IT projects is not good - Cover Oregon; Employment Division software; DMV. House Republicans support creating a Task Force on Information Technology Project Accountability to review past oversight failures and set proper standards for legislative and other oversight of state IT projects.

³ <http://oregonsosblog.us/2013/05/audit-recommends-changes-to-public-assistance-system/>