

Legislative Wrap-Up and Coffee to Debrief!



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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As a new State Representative, I was honored to represent House District 46 in the 2012 session and to serve on the Health Care and the Energy, Environment, Water Committees. Since being sworn in last October, I have had 3 Town Halls, 15 neighborhood coffees, and dozens of meetings with PTAs, neighborhood associations, advocacy groups, businesses and individuals from the district. I want to thank all of you who have communicated with me, and encourage you to come to:

**Next neighborhood coffee for a Legislative Session summary
March 15, 5:30-6:30pm at Karma Café, SE 82nd/SE Harrison (near
PCC)**

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1. Thanking My Colleagues in the Legislature

I want to thank my colleagues in the Legislature, who have welcomed me so warmly and helped me get up to speed so quickly. Sen. Jackie Dingfelder and Rep. Michael Dembrow co-hosted three Town Halls with me, shared their expertise in environmental and education issues, respectively, and gave me ideas for my newsletter. Co-Speaker Arnie Roblan, Representatives Tina Kotek, Val Hoyle, Tobias Read, Lew Frederick, Peter Buckley, Mitch Greenlick, Jules Bailey, and Carolyn Tomei were especially helpful on the issues and process. I look forward to

returning the favor for the newcomers next year!

2. Introducing My Staff and Interns

I am pleased to introduce my legislative assistant, Roberto Gutierrez. Roberto graduated from the University of Oregon in political science and has worked for political campaigns and non-profits in the Portland area. Most recently, he worked for Impact Northwest at Marshall High School, where he helped high school juniors and seniors secure admission and funding to attend college. He shares my passion for closing racial and economic disparities and for community engagement. Roberto is very familiar with Portland and the issues that relate to House District 46, and I am delighted to have him working in my office.

I had three volunteer interns during the session: Theo Burke, Paulina Salgado and Jesse Marseille. Theo is a musician living at Milepost 5 in the district, is studying communication and political science at Portland State University, and is an active Democratic Precinct Committee Person. Paulina is a "Healthy Kids" Outreach Worker for the Washington County Commission on Children and Family Services. Jesse just completed his first semester at Lewis & Clark College, where he is studying international affairs. I'm fortunate to have such accomplished interns, and I appreciate their hard work.

3. Summary of the Session

My top priorities this session were creating jobs and reducing foreclosures, expanding access to affordable health care, coordinating our early childhood and education system, and prioritizing education and vital services during the difficult task of cutting \$340 million from the budget.

With a split (30-30) House, we came together to balance the budget while helping Oregon recover from the recession. In just 34 days, we passed the Oregon Investment Act to help businesses access capital and passed a foreclosure bill to help families stay in their homes.

Oregon is now leading the nation on health care. The Legislature created a health insurance exchange to help individuals and small businesses purchase health insurance, and a Health Transformation initiative that will provide higher quality health care at a lower cost.

Finally, we passed an early childhood and education transformation package that will provide a coordinated system of support and education for our children, from "cradle to career." I remain committed to finding the resources needed to ensure its success.

4. Budget

While reducing most agency budgets by 3.5% to deal with the \$340 million shortfall, we avoided further cuts to DEQ and natural resource agencies and maintained services for vulnerable populations. We restored the Property Tax Deferral Program for many senior and disabled homeowners; we maintained funding for Oregon Project Independence, long-term care programs, and community mental health services; and we restored \$8.5 million to developmental disability programs.

After budget negotiation, K-12 was held harmless. This is small comfort, given the serious cuts K-12 has taken over the years from the State, from the loss of one-time federal funds, and other cuts. I am committed to finding savings in state expenditures and raising revenue to reduce class size and to fund PE, arts, library, counseling, after-school and summer activities, and field trips that develop the whole child.

Funding for early childhood education was also protected, and Employment Related Day Care was maintained for 8,500 families. I will work hard to restore ERDC subsidies in 2013 for the thousands of waitlisted families who cannot afford to pay for childcare without it. While the cost of higher education in Oregon continues to climb, we increased financial aid by \$10 million through the Oregon Opportunity Grants. In order to maximize support for vital government services and for targets private sector investments, we passed measures to cut government bureaucracy and to shine a light on state contracts.

5. Details on Bills by Issue Area

The following is a list of some of the major bills that I supported and that passed. I've **asterisked** the ones I co-sponsored, but many were "committee bills" that legislators could not individually sponsor. You can see how I voted on all bills [here](#). Feel free to contact me for more details about any of the bills we considered-or come to my neighborhood coffee on March 15!

Helping Oregon Families and the Economy

***HB 4040, [Oregon Investment Act](#)**, streamlines the state's economic development activities. It leverages state, federal, and private dollars and consolidates economic development activities from multiple agencies into one existing department. The new 10-member Oregon Growth Board will design and oversee a plan to ensure the state is properly prioritizing public resources, identifying business needs, and allocating seed capital statewide.

***HB 4150, [Expanding the Credit Enhancement Fund](#)**, supports Oregon small businesses by expanding eligibility for Oregon's Credit Enhancement Fund - thereby helping businesses access capital needed to grow and expand by guaranteeing loans. HB 4150 allows non-traded sector businesses, such as retail and service businesses, to apply for loan

guarantees.

SB 1518, Fairness in State Contracting, creates greater transparency of the state's public contracting process. The bill prohibits a writer of project specifications from competing for the project contract.

***SB 1548, Unemployment Discrimination**, prohibits employers from job vacancy advertising that prohibits the unemployed from applying.

HB 4063, Helping Veterans Find Jobs, helps Oregon's veterans use the skills they learn serving their country once they've returned home. Many veterans find it costly and time-consuming to qualify for licenses that merely reaffirm professional abilities they have been practicing for years in the military. HB 4063 will make it easier for Oregon's veterans to make a living with the skills they already possess.

SB 5702, \$9.6 million in Community College Workforce Construction (from DAS Economic Development Fund), expands or upgrades career and technical education facilities at all 17 Oregon community colleges, focusing on projects that expand the colleges' capacity to put Oregonians back to work. Investing in these facilities will better meet this urgent need, leverage matching funds, create good construction jobs, and create a long-term investment in Oregon's workforce. (I co-sponsored HB 4028, which included this and other infrastructure loans for transportation and local public works, but it unfortunately did not pass.)

***SB 1552, Foreclosure Reform**, requires many lenders and homeowners to participate in foreclosure avoidance measures like homeowner counseling and mediation. It prohibits a lender from changing the date of a foreclosure sale without notifying the homeowner. The bill also ends the "dual track" process in which a lender negotiates with a homeowner while simultaneously preparing to foreclose on the home. The bill makes the foreclosure process much fairer to Oregon homeowners and holds banks accountable by instituting enforcement measures.

HB 4039, Property Tax Deferral for Low Income Seniors and People with Disabilities, was restored for some vulnerable seniors and disabled homeowners. Changes made to the program in 2011 to protect its solvency disqualified some homeowners; HB 4039 allows individuals who reapplied to the program and were disqualified because of a reverse mortgage to continue in the program for two years. The Legislature will explore further modifications in 2103.

Supporting and Investing in Youth

HB 4165, Early Learning Council, improves coordination across services for Oregon's youngest children, ages 0-6, to ensure that kids start kindergarten ready to learn. It establishes a new model for

coordinating state services for at-risk kids, consolidates several boards and commissions, and requires the Governor's Early Learning Council to report to the Legislature on ways to improve Oregon's early childhood system. It also oversees the Youth Development Commission for services to children ages 6-20.

SB 1581, the Oregon Education Investment Board Act, aligns our early childhood, K-12 and post secondary programs under a chief education officer. It requires K-12 schools, community colleges and universities to adopt Achievement Compacts with the Oregon Education Investment Board each year, designed to set goals and track progress toward student achievement targets. The Compacts will be developed with input from educators, parents, students, and community members, and will help determine where Oregon's education investments are making the greatest difference. This bill supports Oregon's application for a waiver from the federal No Child Left Behind Act. I supported SB 1581 under the condition it be tied to the Quality Education Model, and I will continue to advocate for the funding and local input needed to ensure its success.

HB 4061, Creating a Special Committee on Higher Education Governance, will determine the scope and level of authority for proposed independent advisory boards of universities. The Committee (four Representatives, four Senators, and 2 Oregon Education Investment Board representatives) will start meeting in April, will explore the potential impact on all universities, and will have its first set of recommendations by mid-August.

***HB 4141, Workforce Investments**, streamlines and adds transparency measures to state workforce investment programs.

HB 4058, Textbook Affordability Act, directs the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to examine ways to reduce the costs of higher education textbooks through partnerships, bulk purchasing, electronic options, open-source materials and other innovative strategies.

SB 1566, Seismic Ratings for Oregon Schools, makes sure parents can easily get information about the safety of their children's school by adding seismic ratings to a report parents already receive. School districts must include a web link to the existing database on seismic readiness as part of their annual district and school performance reports.

HB 4015, Reduces Lead in Schools, by requiring Oregon Health Authority to develop and maintain lead poisoning prevention clearinghouse on its website for K-12 schools.

***SB 1555, Reducing School Bullying**, requires school employees to report acts of harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyber-bullying.

***HB 4077, The Healthy Teen Relationships Act**, directs each school

district to adopt policy regarding teen dating violence.

HB 4016, Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse, helps protect children from abuse by expanding the list of people (mandatory reporters") who are required to report child abuse. It will help protect children attending extracurricular activities hosted at universities and colleges, sports organizations, and other youth-based organizations.

***HB 4146, A Clean Slate for Trafficking Victims**, allows expunction of juvenile court records for prostitution for former under-age victims of human trafficking.

HB 4172, Reinstating the State Police Tobacco Enforcement Fund, allows OLCC to monitor tobacco sold to minors. Currently, although sale of tobacco to persons under 18 is prohibited, no agency is enforcing this law. A recent investigation showed that youth were able to buy tobacco 19% of the time. Oregon could lose \$7 million in federal money for addictions and mental health treatment if we our retail-sales-to-minors rate exceeds 20%. Since tobacco is the single greatest cause of preventable death and disease, we should prevent our youth from accessing and getting addicted to it.

Supporting Healthy Communities and a Clean Environment

SB 1580, Health Care Transformation, creates locally based Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs) for the Oregon Health Plan. It aims to address the skyrocketing cost of health care to the state, families, and businesses by offering integrated physical, mental and dental health care for Medicaid and Medicare patients. By focusing on prevention and coordinated care of people with chronic diseases, this bill is projected to save \$1-3 billion over the next five years in health care costs.

HB 4164, Health Insurance Exchange, implements Oregon's Health Insurance Exchange, as required by the federal Affordable Care and Patient Protection Act of 2010. It creates a central marketplace where individuals and small businesses can compare health insurance plans, purchase a plan regardless of pre-existing health conditions, and receive tax credits and subsidies on a sliding scale up to 400% of poverty level. It will enable more businesses and individuals to access affordable health insurance.

HB 4084, Protecting Vulnerable Seniors from Abuse, creates new protections for Oregon's most vulnerable seniors. The bill increases the statute of limitations for crimes against the elderly and modifies record disclosure laws to facilitate faster investigation of abuse. It creates a new council to review elder abuse reporting and determine root causes of elder abuse and how it can be prevented in the future.

SB 1507, Removing Barriers to HIV Testing, allows for an "opt in" as

opposed to the current "opt out" permission form. This will remove barriers to HIV testing, which will help find and treat patients with HIV, preventing millions of dollars in health care costs.

HB 4017, Ignition Interlock Devices, must be installed for five years on the vehicles of the most dangerous repeat drunk drivers. The installation cost must be covered by the drunk drivers themselves, with exceptions for those who qualify for SNAP (food stamps).

***HB 4068, Fish By-catch**, allows the use of by-catch, fish that is caught unintentionally while commercial fishing for a different type of fish. The Oregon Food Bank will be able to use by-catch as a form of payment when food banks need to get fish processed. In return, companies will process the fish and keep a small portion of the by-catch. This law will help many families in need of healthy food.

SB 1512, Reduces Mercury Lighting in Fluorescent Light Bulbs, by lowering the allowable amount of mercury in compact fluorescent light bulbs sold in Oregon and by directing state agencies to use mercury content data in preferential purchasing.

SB 1510, New Marine Reserves. After ten years of extensive public input from scientists, state agencies, area fishermen and coastal communities, SB 1510 establishes marine reserves and marine protected areas at Cape Falcon, Cascade Head and Cape Perpetua to ensure the long term health of our ocean and our fishing industry.

Finally, I was chief co-sponsor of two bills which did not pass but which I plan to re-introduce next year:

***HB 4123, Toxics Disclosure for Healthy Kids**, would require the Oregon Health Authority to identify the "priority chemicals of concern to children" and would require manufacturers with over \$5 million in annual revenue to disclose the toxic chemicals in their children's products to OHA. Because there was a "fiscal" to OHA to develop and manage this program, I knew that it would not pass the 2012 session but wanted to build the foundation for this legislation in 2013. I want to thank Oregon Environmental Council for its lead in shaping and championing this bill, and Family Forward Oregon and the many other advocates who testified on its behalf.

***HB 4124, Bereavement Leave**, would include the death of a family member as one of the reasons (along with birth, adoption, sick leave and taking care of sick family members) employees of businesses with at least 25 employees could take unpaid leave to grieve and take care of personal matters. I was disappointed that the committee co-chair from the other party refused to give this bill a public hearing - a challenge of co-governance. I appreciate Family Forward Oregon, hospice workers, veterans, faith-based groups and others who are committed to bringing

this issue back next year.

6. Interim Contact Information

Please contact Roberto and me about neighborhood events, issues, and legislation you would like to see in 2013. You can contact us at:

rep.alissakenyguyer@state.or.us

District office: 2104 NE 45th Ave, Portland, OR 97213

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As always, I hope to hear from you!

Alissa