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Contact: Caitie Butler

(503) 680-6944

caitie.butler@state.or.us

Oregon Senate Adjourns Sine Die, Ending Session Sending Costly Mandates to Oregon Families and Small Businesses

Salem, Ore. - Shortly after 1 p.m. today, the Oregon Senate adjourned sine die, ending a contentious 32-day session marked by fast-tracked partisan mandates costing Oregon small businesses and consumers.

Senate Republicans fought against two new, costly mandates: a three-tiered minimum wage that hundreds of small business owners testified will make it difficult for them to stay in business and create jobs, and a utility mandate that will raise electricity prices by up to 40% while doing little to reduce carbon emissions.

"We did everything we could to inject reason into this session, slow the legislative process down, and make sure we're not setting Oregonians up for failure from unintended consequences of complex legislation that hasn't been fully vetted," said Senate Republican Leader Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day). "Special interest campaign donors won this session, not working Oregonians."

Senate Republicans also introduced bills to stop campaign contribution kickbacks, give rural counties flexibility in land use laws to incentivize development and job creation, fund workforce training programs, protect small businesses from new mandates and redirect over \$300 million in wasteful spending to K-12 education, job training, mental health services, and the Rainy

Day Fund. All were rejected by Senate Democrats. Senate Democrats also refused to address Oregon's rapidly ballooning PERS liability, now totaling over \$20 billion, which will force education cuts in 2017.

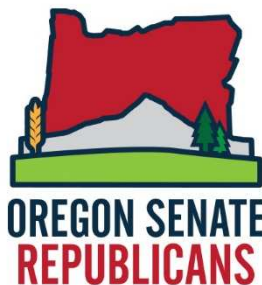
"Senate Republicans were ready to work with our colleagues across the aisle to stop wasteful spending, fix our looming PERS mess, and pass measures to incentivize job creation and train Oregon workers for family-wage jobs," said Senator Tim Knopp (R-Bend). "These missed opportunities leave Oregonians without family-wage jobs and our school districts and local governments with holes in their budgets, forcing them to lay off teachers and cut school days. This was the real emergency we should have addressed this session."

Several good bills supported by Senate Republicans emerged from the annual short session, including measures to enhance legal protection for government and nonprofit whistleblowers, extend similar incentives to small and rural businesses currently available to large corporations, maintain parents' ability to enroll their child in the school district best suited for them, preserve the major party status of the Independent Party of Oregon, and ratify the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's decision to delist the Canadian Grey Wolf.

Senate Republicans also killed numerous controversial bills that would have increased health insurance costs to give trial lawyers a raise; restricted Second Amendment rights; increased property taxes, hurt neighborhood stores, financial institutions, and small miners; and wasted money by allowing Trimet to resurrect the failed CRC boondoggle.

"Despite the often contentious nature of this legislative short session, we are pleased we could work with our colleagues across the aisle to pass important bills to help rural Oregon and start to restore Oregonians' trust in government," said Senator Jeff Kruse (R-Roseburg). "We will continue to work for consensus solutions for the issues Oregon families and small businesses face, improving the quality of life for Oregonians in every corner of our state."

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