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For fiscal sanity freeze hiring

Republicans denounce Democrat plan to throw off well over a quarter of a million vulnerable Oregonians from health care plans and to slash services for veterans and seniors

SALEM, Ore.-Today, Republican leadership at the Statehouse promoted their solution to get the state's fiscal house in order. Republicans say a freeze on hiring non-essential state workers should be enacted first and foremost, along with other administrative efficiencies. An initial analysis from the Legislative Fiscal Office (LFO) shows a hiring freeze for 'non-essential' personnel could result in significant savings, up to \$790 million per biennium, or half of the Democrats' so-called "shortfall." This would require the governor to forebear pay raises and show spending discipline. A non-essential state workers hiring freeze means police, firefighters, first responders, corrections and health care providers are not included in the freeze.

"We have options, we have solutions, and we have bills to fix the structural problems plaguing our state's government. We must move forward with a budget that isn't a list of red-alert threats. Senate Republicans are committed to listening to Oregonians who have clearly stated, repeatedly, we are not interested in hiking taxes and hurting the poor to satisfy overspending Democrat politicians," said Senate Republican Leader Ted Ferrioli, of John Day.

Senate Republicans in January agreed cuts needed to be made, but that government overspending shouldn't be done on the backs of veterans, seniors, other vulnerable Oregonians. This week, Democrats misleadingly claimed Republicans support the deep cuts to programs for vulnerable Oregonians like throwing off well over a quarter of a million Oregonians from their health care plans.

"Democrats proposed a cynical list of threats to our most vulnerable. They did this to scare people into thinking we don't have any other option besides tax hikes. But there's a better way: coming together and figuring out a budget that works, that protects all Oregonians," said Senate Republican Deputy Leader Tim Knopp, of Bend. "Oregonians can count on us to advocate for a 'Oregonians first' approach to the budget that puts government in its place."

According to the *Register-Guard's* Saul Hubbard most Oregonians would prefer that state lawmakers close a \$1.6 billion budget gap by decreasing spending rather than increasing taxes, per a new poll released by the Oregon School Boards Association.

"We are going to have our work cut out for us, with everyone up in arms over the proposed cuts, but we can do it. Once the partisan posturing calms down, I'm believe we will discern that Oregonians are telling us to get our financial house in order before they are willing to give us more revenue. They want long term solutions, but asking for new revenue to solve old problems won't fly," said Senate Republican Deputy Leader Jeff Kruse, of Roseburg.

Kruse added:

"The cuts are not cuts as people would think, in reality they are just smaller increases than they think they need."

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