



PRESS RELEASE

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House Democrats launch Government Accountability, Transparency and Efficiency alliance

SALEM – Oregon House Democrats today announced the formation of a new coalition based on a shared commitment to three principles of governing: accountability, transparency, and efficiency.

Spearheaded by four legislators, the caucus has agreed to work together in an effort to save public money, make government more transparent, and push for increased government and tax accountability.

“If we’re going to invest in schools and the services that Oregonians need, we’ve got to push government to get its priorities straight,” Rep. Ben Unger (D – Hillsboro) said. “It’s our responsibility to make the most out of our limited tax dollars so we can invest in Oregon’s future.”

At its core, the Government Accountability, Transparency, and Efficiency caucus – also known by the members involved as “GATE” – hopes to find a “gateway to a better budget,” according to Unger.

Throughout the 2013 legislative session, GATE members will seek bills that advance these values and work to support their passage.

“We are leaving no stone unturned in our effort to increase government efficiency,” said Rep. Nancy Nathanson (D – Eugene), who established the Government Efficiency Task Force in 2009 to streamline and improve government services. “We’ve already gotten rid of more than a half-dozen outdated or unnecessary laws during this session, and I plan to keep pushing for bills that will improve our system so we can focus on real priorities.”

A bill that would add a “sunset” to a number of tax expenditures is among the group’s first announced priority bills. The bill – HB 2001 – would help legislators make sure that Oregon’s tax dollars are being spent wisely.

“We need to do everything we can to reclaim the money Oregon is spending on ineffective tax breaks and credits,” Rep. Paul Holvey (D – Eugene) said. “We must use every dollar we can find to reinvest in our schools and services to the most vulnerable Oregonians.”

GATE members are also encouraging the public to get engaged with the cost-saving process.

“There are so many ways we can save public money,” Rep. Shemia Fagan (D – Clackamas) said. “Some of the best ideas for saving money come from our constituents.”

Other legislators participating in GATE include:

Rep. Jules Bailey
Rep. Jeff Barker
Rep. Phil Barnhart
Rep. Brent Barton
Rep. Deborah Boone
Rep. Peter Buckley
Rep. Brian Clem
Rep. Michael Dembrow
Rep. Margaret Doherty
Rep. Lew Frederick
Rep. Joe Gallegos
Rep. Chris Garrett
Rep. Sara Gelser
Rep. David Gomberg
Rep. Chris Gorsek

Rep. Mitch Greenlick
Rep. Chris Harker
Rep. Val Hoyle
Rep. Alissa Keny-Guyer
Rep. Betty Komp
Rep. John Lively
Rep. Greg Matthews
Rep. Caddy McKeown
Rep. Tobias Read
Rep. Jeff Reardon
Rep. Carolyn Tomei
Rep. Jessica Vega Pederson
Rep. Jennifer Williamson
Rep. Brad Witt

Some of the bills already moved by the GATE caucus include:

HB 2140 - allows local government to earn better returns on investments and put that money back into their communities. Referred to Ways and Means on February 15, 2013.

HB 2141 and **HB 2142** – repeal outdated county statutes. Both bills passed Oregon House on February 13, 2013.

HB 2143 – ends redundant audits of county jails, increases government efficiency. Passed Oregon House on February 27, 2013.

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