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Democratic leaders focus on helping middle class families, small businesses in short February session

SALEM – Senator Diane Rosenbaum and Representative Tina Kotek, the Democratic Leaders of the Oregon Senate and House, announced their priorities for the 2012 February session this morning during a press conference at the state capitol. They outlined agendas that focus on helping middle class families and small businesses in Oregon that continue to struggle with economic recovery.

“We hear from people all across Oregon who are still working their way out of this recession,” said Kotek (D-North/Northeast Portland). “House Democrats are focused on getting Oregon families on a path to prosperity by spurring job growth, helping them stay in their homes, funding the services they count on, and making health care more affordable.”

“Democrats have a plan for the February session to address the needs of Oregonians,” said Rosenbaum (D-Portland/Milwaukie). “We are committed to protecting middle class families and supporting small businesses from all corners of the state. These Oregonians are counting on us to fight for them in these tough times.”

Rosenbaum and Kotek were joined by Ginny Real of Salem, who lost her home to foreclosure after her bank refused to work with her to renegotiate her loan, and James Vander Meide of McMinnville, a small business owner who has struggled to get access to the capital he needs to launch and grow his business. Both Oregonians called upon the Legislature to take action on these critical issues.

House and Senate Democrats’ agendas for the February session include concepts addressing the foreclosure crisis that has hit hard across our state and proposals that will spur job growth by making it easier to own and grow a business in Oregon. Democratic leaders also focused on proposals to improve accountability in the public contracting process and increase oversight of the health insurance industry to make sure that Oregonians get the greatest value out of every dollar.

“Protecting essential services that Oregonians rely on is the top priority for Democrats,” said Rosenbaum. “We will balance this budget and eliminate waste in order to protect the vital programs that serve our seniors, kids, and most vulnerable.”

“This session is about priorities. We will prioritize middle class families while holding banks and insurance companies accountable for the hard times they are putting families through” said Kotek. “And in state government

we will prioritize direct services - preventing teacher layoffs in our schools, protecting in-home care for seniors and funding programs that keep people out of poverty. By making government more transparent and accountable, we are being responsive to the needs of Oregonians.”

The Senate Democratic Agenda can be found at

http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/senatedemocrats/2012_OSD_Agenda.pdf

The House Democratic Agenda can be found at

http://www.leg.state.or.us/housedemocrats/HouseDemActionPlan_Jan2012.pdf

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