



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Unemployment extension has final vote, on the way to Governor's desk *Nearly 19,000 Oregonians will get six weeks more help while they look for work*

SALEM – The Senate Democrats voted this morning to fulfill a major pledge of their February agenda by approving a six week extension in unemployment insurance benefits for out-of-work Oregonians. House Bill 3655 will help nearly 19,000 Oregonians make ends meet while they search for employment.

“The most important thing the Oregon Legislature can do right now is to provide meaningful help for hardworking Oregonians who are struggling to survive in this difficult economy,” said Senator Diane Rosenbloom (D-Portland), chair of the Senate Commerce and Workforce Development Committee. “The emergency unemployment benefits in this bill will allow thousands of Oregon families to put food on the table and a roof over their heads while they continue to look for work.”

The unemployment extension in HB 3655 has the added benefit of providing dollars that go directly into local communities. Checks are often used to pay rent and buy groceries and other essentials.

“Most of these dollars stay in Oregon,” said Senator Rod Monroe (D-Portland), who carried the bill on the floor. “This is relief for both out-of-work Oregonians and the communities who will see these dollars put right back into their economies.”

HB 3655 will not affect current employer rates or the unemployment insurance trust fund balance. The extension is estimated to last until mid-April.

“Even with unprecedented unemployment numbers, we’ve been very deliberate and careful in how we use Oregon unemployment trust fund,” said Senate Majority Leader Richard Devlin (D-Tualatin). “Compared to many states that are looking to the Federal government for a bailout and are kicking people off the rolls, Oregon sets a national example.”

The bill will now go to the Governor’s desk for approval.

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