



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

Oregon State Legislature
State Capitol
Salem, OR

NEWS RELEASE

June 27, 2009

CONTACT: Molly Woon (503) 986-1074
molly.woon@state.or.us

Senate approves budget cuts for legislature, reconfigures session for savings *Government transparency and accountability has big day in Senate*

SALEM – As the 75th Assembly moves towards sine die, the Legislative budget for 2009-2011 was approved in the Senate this afternoon. The Legislature will stretch dollars within its own budget by reducing the length of the 2011 session to 5 months and by consolidating the days on which interim committees can meet. Both the session and interim supply and staff salary budgets of the 90 members of the Legislative Assembly will be reduced.

“We’re making real cuts and finding new ways to conduct our business that will make taxpayers’ dollars go further,” said Senate President Peter Courtney (D-Salem/Gervais/Woodburn).

The budgets of the offices of the Senate President, Speaker of the House, House and Senate Majority Leaders, and House and Senate Minority Leaders will be reduced by 18 percent for the biennium. The offices of the Secretary of the Senate and Chief Clerk of the House will see their budgets cut by 13 percent.

House Bill 5025 also reduces the budgets of other agencies within the Legislative Assembly; extends the salary freeze imposed on Assembly staff last February through January 2011; and reduces phones lines in legislative offices during the interim.

Also today, the Senate voted for House Bill 2500, legislation that creates a transparency website about state government. State agencies, including the Legislative Assembly, will be required to provide financial information about revenue, expenditures, audits, and agency programs to the website. That information will then be made available for Oregonians to view and search online.

“Given these challenging economic circumstances, it is more important than ever that Oregonians are able to access information about how their tax dollars are spent,” said Senate Majority Leader Richard Devlin (D-Tualatin). “Fiscal responsibility and delivering the greatest value on every dollar we spend are both cornerstones of our agenda this session. House Bill 2500 is an excellent example of our adherence to these values.”

States across the country and the federal government are making efforts to create searchable Internet sites to allow people to see detailed records of how their tax dollars are spent. Thirteen states have launched such websites since 2007 through legislative or gubernatorial action. Additional websites have been created by other

state constitutional officers in 10 states.

###

For more information on the Senate Majority Caucus, please visit oregonsenatedemocrats.com