



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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End-of-session work shows ongoing commitment to job growth and training *Two bills passed this afternoon will help Oregonians get back on their feet*

SALEM –Two bills passed this afternoon demonstrate the Senate’s ongoing focus on helping out-of-work Oregonians get through tough times and train them for the jobs of the future. House Bill 2398 creates the Career Readiness Certificate Program to assess workplace and college readiness skills to match workers with potential employers. House Bill 3483 makes it easier for unemployed Oregonians to continue receiving unemployment benefits while participating in a qualified workforce training program and extends emergency unemployment insurance benefits for people who have exhausted all available benefits.

“Oregon has been hit especially hard in this national recession,” said Senate Majority Leader Richard Devlin (D-Tualatin). “That is why creating job opportunities for Oregonians has been front and center this session. This legislation recognizes the relationship between helping Oregonians who have lost a job and supporting training programs that allow them to find new employment, while also training the newest generation of Oregon workers.”

The Career Readiness Certificate Program creates an assessment and certification for Oregonians in participating high schools, community colleges, and regional career centers. Employers will be able to identify workers based the certification they seek and potential employees will be able to identify areas where they can improve their skill sets to meet the needs of employers. HB 2398 also creates grants for pilot programs offering experience in certified trades for high school juniors and seniors.

HB 3483 authorizes an extension of unemployment benefits for an additional 13 weeks, beginning in October 2009. More than 11,000 Oregonians are likely to exhaust their benefits between August and December 2009. It also allows low-wage workers who have lost their jobs to acquire the skills they need to qualify for higher paying jobs in high demand occupations.

“This is another example of how we have made 2009 a jobs session. We have created thousands of jobs and with measures like these we are giving Oregonians more tools to help work our way out of this crisis,” said Senate President Peter Courtney (D-Salem/Woodburn/Gervais).

The Legislature’s focus on jobs this session, through targeted investments in health care, transportation and capital construction, has contributed to the biggest jobs package in Oregon history. Combined with the “Go Oregon” bond plan approved in January, a \$1 billion transportation plan, the expansion of access to health

care under the Oregon Health Plan, and a \$1.3 billion capital construction budget that passed Friday, these investments will create tens of thousands of jobs over the next decade.

Both bills now go to the Governor for his approval.

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