



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Senate Democrats applaud Emergency Board actions to protect vital services *Bates and Devlin, key negotiators, say protecting programs will save lives*

SALEM – Following unanimous action by the Legislature’s Emergency Board this morning, Senator Richard Devlin (D-Tualatin) and Senator Alan Bates (D-Ashland) commended the Emergency Board for approving actions that will protect the services that over 16,000 disabled adults and kids, elderly, and their families rely on.

“As Oregonians continue to face challenging times, Senate Democrats are committed to continuing to protect the most vulnerable Oregonians and addressing the needs of middle class Oregonians,” said Devlin, who was asked by Senate President Peter Courtney to act as one of the Senate’s two key negotiators on finding an agreement on the Department of Human Services budget with stakeholders. “These services and programs are critical to the well-being of the Oregonians who rely on them.”

Today’s actions will allocate \$17 million to DHS from the Legislature’s emergency fund to save services cut by the Governor’s budget reductions last month. This includes keeping seniors in their homes, helping families take care of their children with disabilities, and protecting Community Mental Health programs for people without Medicaid assistance.

"Oregon's priorities are clear--we're going to do everything we can to take care of our most vulnerable family members, friends and neighbors," said Bates, the other Senator asked to participate in the negotiations and co-chair of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services. "We are struggling to address the worst financial crisis of our lifetimes, and we have a long way to go. By taking these actions now, we give Oregon the best possible chance to survive this crisis intact."

Devlin pointed out that by protecting these vital services now, the state will avoid higher costs down the road while retaining federal dollars and protecting jobs.

“Today we addressed the most immediate needs of vulnerable Oregonians and preserved the jobs of workers who provide these essential services,” said Devlin. “This will continue to be our guiding philosophy as we work through this budget crisis, step by step.”

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