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Senate Republicans Reflect on 2018 Short Session

SALEM, Ore.- Oregon lawmakers adjourned the 2018 legislative session today, a full eight days ahead of the constitutional deadline of March 11th. Despite Democrats' claims of bipartisanship, many substantial policy changes were forced through this shorter than average short session.

Senate Bill 1528, a \$1.3 billion controversial tax increase on small businesses flew through the building without bipartisan support.

"The session was an assault on local businesses," said Senator Brian Boquist (R-Dallas). "The Democrats passed a \$1.3 billion small business tax increase while their corporate donors were not harmed. The increase was unnecessary and unfair. Mom-and-pop shops, small startups and young entrepreneurs will suffer."

House Bill 4145, the highly debated "Boyfriend Loophole" bill, had no Republican support in the Senate, and attempts at compromise were shot down by Senate Democrats, as was the amendment proposed by Senate Republicans, allocating \$20 million to the Oregon State Police to enforce firearms laws.

"Senate Republicans made every effort to compromise on this bill," said Senator Kim Thatcher (R-Keizer). "We asked for more time,

and few changes that would have garnered bipartisan support. We attempted to reach across the aisle, and the majority party chose not to reach back."

Senate Republicans delayed a number of bills that would have been harmful to Oregon's economy, including the "Cap and Trade" proposal pushed by Democrats in both the House and the Senate.

"Job loss plus increased cost of living would have forced many Oregonians into "energy poverty", " said Senator Alan Olsen (R-Canby). "We consistently pointed out the flaws in this legislation, including the fact that taking away good paying jobs from hardworking Oregonians is not the right solution."

Senate Bills 1566 and 1529, both PERS related bills, take an important step towards paying down PERS unfunded liabilities, and buying down PERS rates.

"For the better part of two decades, Oregon Republicans have said that PERS unfunded actuarial liabilities are a big problem," said Senator Tim Knopp (R-Bend). "Now, we are seeing action from the legislature that shows we were right. This is a drop in the bucket, but when you're paying down debt you have to start somewhere."

"This session we saw legislation pass through that should never be considered in a short session," said Senator Jackie Winters (R-Salem) "It is disappointing that we didn't see more Senate Republican priorities move, but I am proud of the hard work we did as a caucus to prevent more bad bills from passing this session."

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