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Democrats Raid K-12 Education, Rejecting Intent of Voters to Spend Corporate Kicker on Oregon Students

Salem, OR - Senate Democrats are undermining the will of Oregon voters by refusing to spend the corporate kicker on K-12 education, as mandated by the Oregon constitution, argued Senate Republicans today.

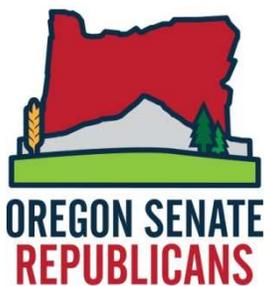
"In 2012, Oregon voters chose to redirect extra corporate tax revenue to bolster the education budget so our schools have the resources they need," said Senate Republican Leader Ted Ferrioli. "By redirecting the corporate kicker to education, Oregonians sent the message that strong schools are the top Oregon value. Now, Senate Democrats want to undercut voters and spend the corporate kicker on other programs without sending a dime to K-12 education."

The May Revenue Forecast predicts \$61.3 million in corporate tax revenue that should be constitutionally dedicated to K-12 education spending in the next biennium. Measure 85, passed in 2012, directs the corporate kicker to "the General Fund for purposes of K-12 education." However, Senate Republicans pointed out, the Ways and Means Co-Chairs' budget does not include an extra \$61.3 million for K-12 education above the currently allocated \$7.361 billion. Instead, they are spending the corporate kicker on other programs, not education.

"Senate Democrats refused to fully fund education earlier this session, hoping that Oregonians would be willing to return their kicker tax refunds to the state or raise taxes to prevent fewer school days and larger class sizes," said Senator Chuck Thomsen (R-Hood River). "Now we learn they're ignoring Oregon voters and spending the corporate kicker on their pet priorities instead of K-12 education. This money should go straight to our classrooms where it belongs."

Senate Democrats also refused to allocate more than 40 percent of additional revenue from the May forecast to K-12 education. If they had dedicated all additional revenue, Senate Republicans suggested, they could fully fund education at \$7.5 billion without raising taxes or keeping the personal kicker.

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