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**'Reverse Christmas Tree' Package Would Reallocate \$203 Million in Unnecessary, Wasteful Spending to Schools**

Salem, OR - Today, Senate Republicans released a "Reverse Christmas Tree" package of wasteful spending bills passed or by the Democrat-controlled legislature this session. The \$203 million in expensive, unnecessary projects and policies should be sent immediately instead to the State School Fund, they argued.

"Democrat leaders have spent the past five months pushing expensive, partisan programs through the legislature that cost Oregonians real money," said Senator Chuck Thomsen (R-Hood River). "Now they want to create a Task Force to figure out how to reduce class sizes? The answer is simple: more funding and more teachers. We don't need a task force; we need to fully fund education now."

Earlier this session, Senate Republicans advocated for an \$8 billion K-12 education budget, allocating unexpected revenue from economic growth to Oregon schools. Instead, Democrats passed a \$7.373 billion education budget, which will force school districts across the state to lay off teachers and cut school days.

By adding this additional \$203 million to the State School Fund, Senate Republicans explained, Oregon schools could hire 4,067 new teachers next year.

"Democrats refused to fully fund K-12 education this session, despite an extra \$1.8 billion in new revenue and multiple opportunities to pass a fully funded budget," explained Senator Tim Knopp (R-Bend). "We've passed \$203 million worth of new mandates and programs that don't

reflect Oregon values. Oregon citizens believe fully funding education is the legislature's top priority, and we have an opportunity to live up to their expectations by allocating the funds in this Reverse Christmas Tree package straight to our classrooms."

The Reverse Christmas Tree package was announced ahead of the final version of what is known as the Christmas Tree bill, an omnibus bill that allocates funding to new programs. Some of the funding in the Reverse Christmas Tree package includes \$768,000 to implement the new Motor Voter law (SB 5036); an \$87,673 General Fund appropriation to enforce the toy ban (SB 478); \$778,141 for implementation of the Low Carbon Fuel Standard (SB 324); and \$10,408,710 for Passenger Rail (HB 5040).

In May, Senate Republicans decried the theft of \$61.3 million from the corporate kicker that Oregon voters intended to allocate to the education budget. Should Democrats follow the direction of voters and give the corporate kicker money back to schools, alongside funds from the Reverse Christmas Tree package, the legislature could allocate over \$250 million more to K-12 education next biennium.

A motion to adopt the Reverse Christmas Tree amendment failed on a party-line vote in the Oregon Senate.

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