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## **2014 Legislative Agenda**

While many politicians are claiming victory, a look around the state reveals that Oregonians have been left behind by a slow economic recovery. State government is out-of-touch and lacks accountability. As a result workers, students, seniors and communities have been left without the resources they need to be safe and successful. Senate Republicans are introducing a 2014 legislative agenda that focuses on protecting and empowering vulnerable Oregonians who have been ignored.

### *Job training for vulnerable unemployed Oregonians*

At 17.8 percent, the unemployment rate among young people in Oregon is more than twice the state average<sup>1</sup>. Of those who do have work, only 55 percent of them have full time employment. Unfortunately, many hardworking Oregonians are under-employed. One of the biggest barriers between a young person and a fulltime job is practical, hands on training.

**Senate Republicans are proposing an Accelerated Study in Associates Program (ASAP). The ASAP helps community college students better connect core curriculum with technical and vocational programs by blending and accelerating the first year of study.** The ASAP aligns curriculum to the hiring needs of the region. Through ASAP, students immediately begin to learn skills that will prepare them for the workforce in their first year of college.

### *Tax and legal equity for small businesses*

While much has recently been done to provide some businesses with tax relief, it has not been fairly applied to the smallest businesses that are critical to driving our economy. **Senate Republicans are proposing an expansion of the historic small business tax cut enacted during the Special Session. This would protect the smallest sole-proprietors and single-member LLCs so they have the same 2% tax reduction offered to small businesses and larger companies. Senate Republicans will also introduce legislation to protect small businesses from “patent trolls” who extort “licensing fees” by threatening litigation against patents.**

### *Greater Educational opportunity for students*

Vulnerable students, such as low income, special needs or foster students, often fall through the cracks at their local public school. Without extra resources, these students can have a difficult time finding an educational environment that works well for them. **Senate Republicans will introduce the Education Equity Emergency Act (E3), which awards Opportunity Scholarships to these students. Opportunity Scholarships will provide vulnerable students with money they can use to attend private school, invest in tutoring, attend educational therapy, or set aside for college.**

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<sup>1</sup> <http://younginvincibles.org/2013/05/new-report-calls-unemployment-rates-a-crisis-for-young-adults-in-oregon/>

*Protection for vulnerable seniors*

As Oregonians grow older, their health and safety should be a top priority in every corner of the state. **Senate Republicans will introduce legislation requiring law enforcement agencies to have “silver alert” response protocols for missing seniors, especially those with dementia or other mental challenges. Senate Republicans will also fight to allow vulnerable patients to obtain higher-cost medication when an insurer’s preferred lower-cost medications do not address the patient’s specific medical needs.**

*Food for vulnerable families*

Despite a slow economic recovery, more than 509,000 Oregonians continue to suffer from food insecurity<sup>2</sup>. **Senate Republicans will introduce a crop donation tax credit, which will help food banks and farmers to put more food on the tables of the hungry.**

*Economic development for vulnerable communities*

Unemployment is chronically more severe in rural Oregon communities, where the number of people without work can be as much as five percent higher than the rest of the state<sup>3</sup>. While state government focuses most economic development efforts in denser urban areas, the industries crucial to the well-being of rural Oregon receive much less attention. **Senate Republicans will introduce legislation that removes regulatory barriers to job creation in communities with sustained high unemployment. The legislation will fast-track the siting of new industries and incent new job creation in areas with high unemployment.**

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<sup>2</sup> <http://oregonhunger.org/files/2013%20USDA%20Food%20Security%20report.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.oregonlive.com/money/index.ssf/2013/03/joblessness\\_in\\_oregon\\_county\\_b.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/money/index.ssf/2013/03/joblessness_in_oregon_county_b.html)