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Oregon Jobs Caucus forms to push employment bills

Salem, OR – After three months without action on any significant job-creating bills, Senate members are inviting legislators to join a bi-partisan, bi-cameral caucus to advocate for bills that can help spur economic growth.

“The clock is ticking, and we believe the window for action is now,” said Senator Tim Knopp (R-Bend). “We are inviting Democrats and Republicans to band together and pass legislation that will help foster family wage jobs across Oregon. Oregon has the potential to be an economic powerhouse, if we have the vision to get there.”

Most members of the legislature ran on promises to create family wage jobs in Oregon. Senate Republicans have been calling for action on job-creating legislation, even sending Senate President Peter Courtney (D-Salem) a menu of bills that could earn bi-partisan support. Bills sponsored by the majority party that would help create private sector jobs have not been voted on. The group hopes to pursue any jobs bill from either party that help small businesses grow and add more employees.

“Oregon’s recovery has been too slow and has left too many communities in Oregon behind,” said Senator Bruce Starr (R-Hillsboro). “We aren’t satisfied with a mediocre economy, we don’t want to settle for anything other than one of the regions lowest unemployment and highest average family wages. Oregon has an abundance of opportunity, we want to help Oregonians capitalize on it.”

Knopp, Starr, Senator Betsy Close (R-Albany/Corvallis), Senator Jeff Kruse (R-Roseburg) and Senator Herman Baertschiger (R-Grants Pass), Senator Chuck Thomsen (R-Hood River) and Senator Alan Olsen (R-Canby) are extending an invitation to other Senate members to join them as members of the Oregon Jobs Caucus. The caucus will focus on developing an agenda and strategy to move private sector job creating legislation through the legislative process.

Among the bills Senate Republicans have been asking the President to move are bills that help businesses buy new equipment through accelerated depreciation, encouraging them to enlarge their operations and add new employees; a bill to allow the Governor to exchange tax predictability for economic investment in the state with all Oregon businesses; and a bill to allow for withdrawal of excess water from the Columbia River to boost agricultural production in Eastern Oregon.

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