

# Senate Republican Office

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## **Democrats send PERS reform back to committee** *PERS reform should have equal floor time with tax increases*

**Salem, OR** – Following the defeat of their proposed tax increases, Senate Democrats voted along party lines to send a bill with up to \$5 billion in reforms to Oregon’s Public Employee Retirement System back to committee.

“It’s disappointing, to say the least,” said Senate Republican Leader Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day). “We have worked so hard towards a compromise proposal, and sadly this revenue bill was created by one party, behind closed doors. But the PERS reforms are widely recognized as a boon to Oregon classrooms and communities, and should have had a fair hearing and opportunity for members to vote.”

With \$2 billion more to spend this budget cycle than last, Republicans have been very hesitant to vote for tax increases. They’ve been willing to consider a thoughtfully crafted, consensus based increase in revenue if it meant serious and significant PERS reforms over the long term and tax certainty for small businesses.

“We have made it very clear that some Republicans are willing to take on the hard issue of increasing revenue, if we get to have a part in crafting the proposals and protecting small businesses,” said Senator Larry George (R-Sherwood). “But today’s revenue proposal was one-sided and partisan and doesn’t represent the values of my constituents.”

Republicans continue to believe that with or without new revenue, PERS reforms should be given an up-or-down vote on the floor, where there is broad bi-partisan support.

“So far revenue has had a fair hearing on the floor, where members were allowed to vote for their conscience,” said Ferrioli. “But that still isn’t true for PERS. I hope that leadership in this building will use the last few days of session to put true reforms back the floor, where Senators and Representatives can do what’s right.”

Republicans also balked at caustic and hyper-partisan press releases issued by the Senate Majority Office and Speaker Tina Kotek. Ferrioli said that Oregon deserves a better dialogue and more accurate characterization of the morning’s debate. “Let’s leave the campaign speeches for May and November, not during the legislative session.”

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