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Senate Republicans: “Governor, we are ready to pass PERS reform”

Small business tax certainty could be key to special session deal

Salem, OR – Senate Republicans re-stated their commitment to passing significant PERS reforms this week, responding to Governor Kitzhaber’s efforts to cobble together support for changes to the underfunded system. Legislative Republicans have largely spearheaded the call for major modifications to the state’s underwater employee retirement system.

“We want to reduce PERS costs to put teachers in classrooms, police officers in patrol cars and firefighters in stations,” said Senate Republican Leader Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day). “We were ready to pass serious reforms when the regular session convened in February, and we are just as ready today.”

Democrats continue to insist on linking tax increases to any type of reforms to Oregon’s broken retirement system. Some Republicans have discussed tax increases but only if they come with some type of tax relief and tax certainty for small businesses.

“The purported deal-killer in the regular session was the Governor’s fear that a Republican proposal to give small business tax relief was ‘too complex’ given the short time frames of the session,” said Ferrioli. “It is the interim between sessions, and we now have the time to work out the details. If he is serious, let’s give small businesses some tax relief and provide classrooms with serious PERS relief. This type of compromise could position Oregon for significant growth and prosperity in the future.”

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