



Legislative Update

February-March 2015

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2015 TAX TIME

Tax filing season is here and don't forget tax returns are due April 15th.

To learn more about filing **statetaxes** [click here](#).

To find out about **federal** tax return information [click here](#).

EMPLOYMENT REPORT

Oregon's [current unemployment rate](#), 6.3%, is the lowest it has been since 2008.

OREGON LEGISLATURE LINKS

Main Website:

So far, my time as a Senator has been a busy succession of action-packed whirlwinds. As a member of the Workforce and Judiciary committees, I am on the front lines of major legislative issues involving public safety, business regulation, gun rights and labor issues. I am making the most of my time on these committees attempting to make a lasting difference for all Oregonians.

Of course the Senate has already tackled a few hot button issues and it seems that many [bills](#) have been rushed through the process with barely any time to consider the consequences.

On a happier note, I have greatly enjoyed working with my new colleagues in the Senate, and despite some of our differences in opinion on some subjects, I have met many wonderful people who deeply care about Oregon and are interested in ensuring that our government is accountable to its citizens.

www.oregonlegislature.gov

To learn more about legislative committees & bills check out the the Oregon Legislative Information System - OLIS at [this link](#).



Sen Thatcher's webpage is at: www.oregonlegislature.gov/thatcher

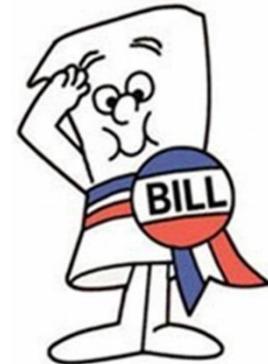
2015 Session Priorities

Grow the Economy and Create Jobs

I am committed to increasing economic growth and opportunity in Oregon so I introduced bills that are foundational to getting at what I hear are some of the biggest barriers for small business growth: state business regulation and permitting processes. After meeting with various business groups, Chambers of Commerce, and agencies dealing with business regulation, [Senate Bill 100](#) and [Senate Bill 101](#) were the result. SB 100 would serve to get the information needed to start chipping away at the most costly regulations. SB 101 would create a Joint Legislative Committee to Review Agency Regulation of Businesses which would be tasked with finding ways to streamline and reduce costly business regulations and leveraging the information gathered from SB 100.

Improve Public Safety

I have always been a strong proponent of public safety and this session I introduced legislation that would build on work that I have done in the past surrounding those who drive drunk and the requirement for them to have ignition interlock devices (IID). [SB 512](#) would require individuals with a court-ordered IID to receive no negative reports during the last six months of the time their IID is installed. I also chief sponsored [SB 816](#), a bill with bipartisan support that would increase penalties for sex trafficking of children.



Second Amendment Rights

I am committed to protecting Oregonians' second amendment rights. Much of my time in the Senate Judiciary Committee is spent fighting back against gun control laws that erode the right to bear arms. The most recent example of this is [SB 941](#). This bill removes the ability for private citizens to use the State Police background check system, and replaces it with a requirement where all private individuals who wish to transfer a firearm, except under a few strict circumstances, would have to bring their guns to a federally licensed firearms dealer to conduct a background check on the person to receive the gun or guns.

I introduced an [amendment](#) that would simply put the onus of conducting a background check on the seller. It is currently a crime to "knowingly" transfer a firearm to a prohibited person. My amendment simply removed the "knowingly" element and gave immunity to those who used the background check system. Not surprisingly, it failed on a party-line vote. I also have a number of pro-2nd amendment bills, but I believe simple arithmetic cancels out the possibility of accomplishing those this session: there simply aren't enough votes.

Increase Quality and Choice in Education

To continue my push for choice and quality in education, I sponsored [SB 562](#) which would create Empowerment Scholarships for special needs and low-income students to gain access to alternative forms of education and educational support such as through charter schools, private schools, tutoring, etc. It is also apparent that schools need, at a minimum, \$7.5B to hold steady and not make big cuts to the school year. There are ways to get to that number, sustainably, without raising taxes, but the House and Senate both passed a budget that falls a few million dollars short of this "hold harmless" budget number of \$7.5B. I anticipate the education budget will be held political hostage at the end of session for the purpose of leveraging some sort of revenue raising scheme. Stay tuned!

Reduce the Size of Government and Increase Transparency

Continuing my push to increase government transparency and accountability, I introduced two bills: [SB 515](#) and [SB 105](#). SB 515 would improve the Oregon Transparency website by increasing user input as well as including more data on state economic development programs. SB 105 would create the Legislative Sunset Advisory Committee. The sunset committee would advise on which of the hundreds of agencies, boards, and/or commissions to sunset, if any, through a methodical, scheduled process (similar to the process used for sunseting tax credits on the Joint Legislative Tax Credit Committee).

Fair and Quality Elections

I believe it is essential that Oregon elections are run in a fair and honest way. This session I have introduced two bills aimed at ensuring quality Oregon elections. One bill is [SB 110](#) which would bring Oregon in line with the federal Help America Vote Act. I also introduced [SB 109](#) which would require the Secretary of State use a statistical sampling technique to identify the number of voters registered who are ineligible to vote.

2015 Legislative Updates

Low Carbon Fuel Standards

In February, the Senate passed [SB 324](#) which would remove the sunset on Oregon's Low Carbon Fuel Standards. The bill was passed on a party-line vote. SB 324 is a bad bill for Oregonians. The legislation will result in an increase in the price of fuel by requiring transportation fuels to reduce their carbon intensity. This means fuels will have to be blended with more biofuels or other products which all raise the price of fuel and reduce engine efficiency. Ultimately, this law will be most harmful to low-income and rural Oregonians.

Auto Insurance Regulation

[SB 411](#) was passed on a partisan vote by the Senate in February. The bill will increase the minimum amount of liability insurance required for Oregon Drivers. Raising the minimum liability will raise the cost of basic auto insurance and price low-income and rural citizens out of the market. The price increases that result from the bill may even encourage more drivers to go without auto insurance.



Automatic Voter Registration

The Senate passed [House Bill 2177](#), aka Automatic Voter Registration, on a party-line vote. The bill would require the Department of Motor Vehicles to send citizens' data to the Secretary of State for the purpose of registering individuals to vote. I voted against the bill because it will make citizens' private data public information, putting victims of domestic and sexual violence at risk. It makes more sense to me, going forward, to have people mark a box or somehow affirm at the time they sign for their driver license that they want to vote, rather than having the government treat them like children who can't figure out how to complete a voter registration card or go online and spend 30 seconds registering to vote there. People have their own reasons for not registering to vote. Automatically enrolling them takes that choice away and treats them like children while potential exposing their private data to unwanted public scrutiny.

Class Action Lawsuits

The Senate also passed [HB 2700](#) which will greatly expand the definition of a class in a class action lawsuit and would exponentially increase award amounts. The bill would also retroactively apply to cases waiting on a final judgement. The legislation could affect an existing court case against the Oregon State Lottery thus jeopardizing school funding from lottery proceeds.

Paid Sick Leave

[SB 454](#) was passed by the Senate Workforce committee on a party line vote. While it has not been passed by the Senate yet, this bill will have a massive impact on businesses. Based on Legislative Revenue Office estimates, the legislation adds approximately \$976 million per biennium in costs for businesses in Oregon, that's nearly \$200 million more than Measures 66 and 67 combined!

Minimum Wage

This session will likely not include a \$15 dollar minimum wage hike bill. Senate President Peter Courtney [said](#) he would not pass such a bill out of the Senate this session. While this is a victory for small business, the chance of an initiative raising the minimum wage is a real one. That being said, a public hearing is scheduled for the evening of April 13th. Click [here](#) for updates on the agendas for this committee or for other committees.

2015 Measure 91 Town Halls

Senator Thatcher will be participating in three town halls focused on the implementation of Measure 91 in April and May. Measure 91 legalized the production, possession, and sale of recreational marijuana in Oregon. Senator Thatcher will co-host the series with Rep. Davis (HD 26), Rep. Doherty (HD 35) and other public officials. The town halls will be held in Wilsonville, Sherwood and Tigard.



The specific location details are:

- Wilsonville - April 15th 6:30-7:30pm - Wilsonville City Hall, Council Chambers - 29799 SW Town Center Loop East, Wilsonville, OR 97070
- Sherwood - April 29th 6:30-7:30pm - Sherwood Police Department - 20495 SW Borchers Dr, Sherwood, OR 97140
- Tigard/King City - May 20th 6:30-7:30pm - Tigard Public Library Public Community Room - 13500 SW Hall Blvd. Tigard, OR 97223

Senator Thatcher held a successful town hall on April 2nd in Dundee with Rep. Post (HD 25) and Rep. Weidner (HD 24). The town hall focused on the implementation of Measure 91 and Oregon Liquor Control Commission Director Steve Marks gave a presentation on the agency's efforts to craft rules and regulations governing marijuana legalization.



Recognizing Special People

Senator Thatcher Sponsors Bill to Memorialize Business Owner and Philanthropist Joan Austin

Senator Thatcher had the honor of speaking on behalf of [Senate Continuing Resolution 10](#) which memorializes Joan Austin of Newberg. Joan and her husband, Ken, started A-dec, the largest privately-owned dental equipment manufacturer in the world.

Mrs. Austin was widely known for her commitment to improving Oregon for everyone. She was also a major advocate for small business and served as the first woman chair of Associated Oregon Industries. She generously contributed to many causes such as Oregon State University's college of business, drug and alcohol abuse treatment programs, and the Newberg Animal Shelter.



In The District

Early this session, I had the pleasure of speaking to a few amazing groups from my district, the Keizer Chamber of Commerce, Keizer Network of Women, and Leadership Newberg. Speaking with motivated and caring citizens is one of the best parts of my job.

I love being able to help my constituents get involved in the Capitol and make a difference for their communities. I also had the opportunity to visit A-dec, America's largest private dental equipment manufacturer, located in Newberg. It was wonderful to see this amazing business from the inside. I greatly appreciate the chance to go behind the scenes!



Legislative Field Trips

I had the pleasure of visiting the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training. It was amazing to see the wide array of training facilities required to train our police and public safety personnel. I enjoyed meeting the wonderful hard working people who work there.

I, along with other members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, visited Coffee Creek Correctional Facility near Wilsonville. It was very informative to learn about the various job training programs offered to inmates and the atmosphere at the facility was very positive.

Thoughts for Thatcher

How would mandatory paid sick leave affect your small business?

[Click here](#) to respond or email sen.kimthatcher@state.or.us

If you want to contact Sen. Thatcher's office you can send an email to: sen.kimthatcher@state.or.us or call 503.986.1713

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