



State Representative Kim Thatcher House District 25

House Bill 4040 Oregon Growth Board for Economic Development State Rep Kim Thatcher Comments on House Floor, February 29, 2012

I don't expect you to follow along with me, but I will not be supporting this bill. I understand nobody wants to be seen as voting against doing something for small business and economic development. And I understand apparently the constitution, and earlier speaker said, that we're supposed to be dabbling in economic development with money but I'm not sure this is what we're supposed to be doing.

I have no doubt that streamlining will take place. I have no doubt that this is an improvement over what we have going right now. I have no doubt that there will be good competent people participating in this board and making the best decisions that they can.

I know this is going to pass, but here's what happens when we put state taxpayer dollars into something, and we start funding something, we can't help but politicize it. And what happens – in what should be private transactions and private businesses and what should be a free market in a free society – we end up moving further the other direction. And this is because we end up tilting the playing field toward businesses operated by the politically connected, the politically correct, and the ones that are politically expedient. Solyndra anyone?

I hope that this board will prevent such things as happened back in Washington, D.C. but we really need to take a step back and make sure, and I think there will be some efforts toward this end, to make sure these programs are working – if you think that these programs are something appropriate for us to do as a state. And politically connected, politically correct, and politically expedient, and I know there are businesses outside of that and I do not blame one of them for participating or advocating for these programs because guess what we have to do everything we can to survive.

As a small businessperson myself, I have attempted over time to access these funds in various programs, unsuccessfully I might add. But that convinced me even further there is very little intention, there is a lot of talk here, but really when it gets down to it, there is very little intention really to let this money go to the normal everyday business folk the small business people – and it really makes me question whether we should be doing this with taxpayer money.

You want to help with economic development. We all want to help with economic development. But here is what we should be doing and why not look at opening up our natural resources instead of locking them away to rot while we struggle and grasp for something that's going to help develop our economy? Instead of taking more money from people, the small business owners out there and putting it into this pot to give away to what I told you before; why don't we let people keep more of their money so they can have their own economic development program?

Let's quit regulating the life out of people, the people who start the small businesses in the state and hire most of the people who are employed in this state. It's getting to the point where only the big guys really have any hope of standing up against these regulations that are literally strangling the life out of people. Instead we should be looking to put freedom back into the free market system and get to the root of what it is that makes a business think they have to come begging to the government for some capital. Let's get to the root of it. This isn't it. I wish them well. I just hope we're not creating more false hope.