

**State Representative
Kim Thatcher
(R-Keizer/Newberg/St. Paul)
House District 25**



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CONTACT: DAWN PHILLIPS
503-750-1764

***Rep Thatcher Offers Teacher Mentor Legislation
Less Expensive Than Chalkboard Program***

(Salem) With the focus on teacher mentoring programs at the State Capitol this week, [Representative Kim Thatcher](#) (R-Keizer/Newberg/St. Paul) is offering an alternative which is less expensive than the one promoted by the [Chalkboard Project](#). "We could build a special program to encourage retired educators in Oregon to return to the classroom and share some of their vast experience teachers just starting out," said Thatcher.

[House Bill 2506](#) establishes the Retired Senior Volunteer Program within the [Oregon Department of Education](#). In exchange for volunteering their services in local schools, retired teachers would receive health care benefits, something they often lack in their current retirement plans. The measure spells out how retired educators, "may assist and mentor new teachers, assist in classrooms and provide services that supplement course offerings and reduce class sizes."

On Thursday, the [Chalkboard Project](#) outlined their proposal for a new \$27 million dollar plan to reactivate Oregon's Beginning Teacher and Administrator Mentorship Program. (ORS 329.795 to 329.820) The cost per new educator would be an estimated \$5,000 per year. "Chalkboard has put together a very comprehensive program and they have good ideas. I'm suggesting another way to provide quality mentors for new teachers to compliment Chalkboard's efforts," explained Thatcher.

"We don't need to reinvent the wheel," said Thatcher. "We have hundreds of retired teachers around the state who would be a great resource for new members of the teaching profession." For example, the [Oregon Retired Educators Association](#) has 700 members and last year they donated over 72,000 hours of volunteer time in local school districts. Representative Thatcher has received a lot of positive feedback from members of the [Delta Kappa Gamma Society](#) which has 1200 members in Oregon including a large number of retired women educators.

Studies show 40% of Oregon teachers quit in their first five years and the cost for replacements adds up. Representative Thatcher knows the value of mentorship programs. For the past year she's been a volunteer mentor to students at [Barbara Roberts Alternative High School](#) in Salem.

Dozens of states provide mentoring for new classroom teachers. In recent years, Delaware and Hawaii have implemented successful programs like Thatcher's, utilizing retired educators. In addition to HB 2506, Thatcher has introduced a bill to enhance the Oregon State Police using retired troopers ([HB 2505](#)) and another to help public health clinics using retired nurses ([HB 2504](#)).

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900 Court Street NE Salem, OR 97301
503.986.1425 ~ rep.kimthatcher@state.or.us