

**State Representative Kim Thatcher
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Thatcher Helps Draft OSP Funding Package

(Salem) "This new proposal brings stability to the Patrol Division, gives Oregonians 24-hour coverage across the state and doesn't raise taxes," said [State Representative Kim Thatcher](#) (R-Keizer-Newberg-St. Paul) after House Republicans unveiled House Bill 3535 this afternoon. Thatcher is one of the key legislators who helped craft this legislation.

Today the Joint Committee on Ways and Means began nine days of public hearings on the budget for the Oregon State Police (OSP). HB 3535 earmarks 1 percent of the state General Fund for the [Patrol Division at OSP](#). That would provide \$127.6 million enough funding to create 140 new troopers in the agency. There are currently fewer than 300 patrolling Oregon's highways, down from nearly 650 three decades ago. This General Fund dedication will help OSP plan for the future and start to rebuild the force.

"Representative Thatcher is a leader in finding a stable and dedicated funding source for OSP," said Andy Moyer, Vice President of the [Oregon State Police Officers' Association](#). "With this plan the men and women of the State Police can get to the job we know best, reducing traffic crashes and removing impaired drivers from the highways and making Oregon safer for all its citizens and visitors."

"[There was a lot of support for my bills](#) to set aside lottery funding and allow people to donate kicker checks to OSP. However, we realized earmarking a specific appropriation in the General Fund would be a more popular option for some lawmakers," noted Thatcher. [House Bills 2745](#) and [HB 2746](#) were the only funding bills related to State Police to get a hearing so far this legislative session.

Last week, legislative leaders released what's commonly called the "[Co-Chair's Budget](#)" to outline their proposal for the 2007-09 state budget. In it was General Fund money for 100 new troopers. Nine Democratic lawmakers have already joined Republicans in both the House and Senate to push for passage of HB 3535. The Governor's Budget also funded 140 additional troopers, but it relied on a surcharge on auto insurance as the funding mechanism. That surcharge would have raised taxes by nearly \$25 million to cover the cost of the new officers.

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