

State Representative Kim Thatcher (R-Keizer)



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Thatcher Resists Spending Increases; Limits Government Intervention Approves New Sex Offender Penalties

(Salem) State Representative Kim Thatcher voted against several measures to increase spending and government regulations during the Special Session of the Oregon Legislature today. "Whenever lawmakers convene in a Special Session, Oregonians' wallets are not safe," said Thatcher. "I'm glad it was just a one-day session. The longer we're here, the more mischief occurs."

Thatcher opposed spending \$42 million in surplus lottery revenue in the state school formula. "If we want to help schools during tough economic times, we should take the additional lottery funding and put it in a rainy day fund for education," said Thatcher. She also voted against a measure which would have imposed \$16 million a year in new property taxes on residents in the Portland School District without a vote of the people. "It's special treatment for Portland Schools, it's taxation without representation and it's bad policy," Thatcher explained during the floor debate.

"The Department of Human Services has some serious accountability problems and I just don't think we should be pouring more money into a bucket full of holes," noted Thatcher. She did not favor a \$136 million bail out plan which passed the Legislature this afternoon. "I support programs to protect seniors, children, and other citizens who need services, but this agency needs to get a better handle on caseload numbers before we give them millions of additional dollars."

Representative Thatcher voted "no" on new statewide restrictions for pay-day lenders. "I felt this bill before us today had several technical flaws and I was not prepared to jeopardize any entire industry based on legislation with this many problems. Some reforms might be warranted, but this is not the way to go."

The Special Session also passed tough new penalties on sex offenders who abuse children under 12 years old. Thatcher served on the House Judiciary Committee which drafted a similar "Jessica's Law" in 2005. That measure was overwhelmingly approved by the House last year. She explained, "these offenders are the worst of the worst. They prey on young kids and we should throw the book at them." This new law imposes minimum sentences of 25 years for offenders over 18 years of age convicted of first degree rape, sodomy or unlawful sexual penetration. These predators would be subject to lifetime supervision once they're released from prison.

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