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Oregon Senate Majority Whip

House Calls: Your Constituent Newsletter

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Issue: 5

June 4, 2007

Greetings!

As the end of the legislative session draws near, a flurry of important bills were passed by the Senate, all of which promise to bring tangible benefits to Oregonians in the near future. In recent weeks, important progress was made on significant issues like alternative energy, recycling, and health care.

Now that most policy committees have completed their work and closed we will shift our focus to the budget.

As always, thank you to all who have called, e-mailed, or written to share opinions with my office. I look forward to hearing more from you throughout the session.

In health,

Dr. Alan Bates

Legislature Passes Landmark Environmental Bills

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Boost for Alternative Energy and Recycling

In recent weeks, the Oregon Legislature passed a number of landmark bills, intended to preserve and protect our environment for years to come.

SB 707 expands Oregon's famous Bottle Bill by increasing the number of containers that can be recycled in exchange for a deposit. [Read the full text of the bill](#)

HB 2626 creates a recycling program for electronic waste, such as televisions and computers. It requires manufacturers to provide consumers with the opportunity to recycle their products. [Read the full text of the bill](#)

Finally, and most important, SB 838 sets Oregon on the path towards energy independence and reduced carbon emissions by requiring utilities to attain 25% of their energy from clean-energy resources by 2025.

[Find out more](#)

I am proud to have voted for these historic bills.



Healthy Kids Plan may be Referred to Voters

An exciting opportunity to improve health care for Oregon's kids



In the coming months, Oregonians may have the chance to vote on an important new health care initiative funded by a cigarette tax. The Oregon Healthy Kids Plan, which could be referred to voters before the end of the session, provide affordable, comprehensive health insurance coverage to all children in Oregon under the age 19 and will expand Oregon families' access to health insurance while bringing improved health care benefits to thousands of Oregon children whose families cannot

afford private health care plans.

The benefits of funding this program through a cigarette tax are far reaching. Evidence has demonstrated that an increase in the cigarette tax not only leads to a decrease in tobacco sales, but is also the most important and effective way of keeping kids from starting smoking. Over the long term, a tax on cigarettes will reduce our healthcare costs, as well as provide health insurance to low income families so they can get their health care from a cost-effective family physician, rather than an expensive emergency room.

I am a strong supporter of this plan, which I believe is an important step in the ongoing effort to reform Oregon's broken health care system. [Learn More](#)

Smoking Ban Passes Senate

The Senate recently passed SB 571, broadening the ban on smoking in Oregon's public spaces. I am a proud supporter of this bill, which protects Oregonians from the dangers of second-hand smoke. The bill is currently awaiting passage by the House. [Read the bill](#)



No More Junk Food in Oregon Schools

Legislature tackles problem of child obesity head-on



The rise in childhood obesity over the past few years is a threat to the health of Oregon's children. By selling junk food to kids in school cafeterias and vending machines, Oregon schools have been a part of the problem, rather than the solution. To address this, HB 2650 limits the amount of sugar and trans fats in foods served at public schools.

The bill has passed both the House and the Senate and is currently awaiting the Governor's signature. [Learn more](#)

New Protections from Predatory Lending

Interest rates capped for title loans, consumer finance loans, non-traditional home loans

Predatory lending is a serious problem in Oregon. Lenders extending short-term loans to their customers often charge interest rates in excess of 500%.

Legislation currently under consideration in the Senate will help put an end to this practice.

HB 2204 Prohibits title lenders from engaging in predatory lending practices and caps the interest rate on title loans at 36% per annum. [Read the text of the bill](#)

HB 2205 and HB 2871 expand the regulation of consumer finance lenders and cap interest rates at 36%.

[Read HB 2205](#) [Read HB 2871](#)

SB 965 requires lenders to determine the ability of customers to repay non-traditional home loans and establishes additional restrictions on lending-related lawsuits. [Read the rest of the bill](#)
