

Booster Seat Law Saves Lives

Vicki supported SB 480, legislation which increased the booster seat use requirement to 8 years old or those children less than 4'9". The following report is from Officer Bret Barnum with the Portland Police Department and details how the passage of SB 480 helped save a child's life:

It had been dry for nearly the last month and this was the very first rain storm which came through the area. It was very brief; however for the 15 minutes it did rain, it was very hard. The roadway is a two lane (one lane each direction) roadway with a slight left hand curve. The driver was negotiating the left hand curve in the road at the posted speed and lost control on the wet asphalt. The mini-van crossed the center line and struck the curb on the opposite side of the road. The mini-van then flipped on to the passenger side and came to rest.

The female driver was transporting herself and her two young boys. Tenzing was 12 years old and seated in the middle captains chair behind his mom (driver). Silas had just turned 6 years old the month prior, and was seated behind the front passenger seat in a middle captain's chair.

Silas, the 6 year old, was seated and secured properly in a "Kangaroo" booster seat. His mother and father said if the law had not just been changed in June of this year they would have had him out of the booster seat, and he would have been secured in the vehicle in the adult lap/shoulder belt alone. Silas was only about 4'3" in height and weighed approximately 50 pounds.

Due to his height his legs would not have draped comfortably over the end of the seat base. This would have meant for Silas to be comfortable sitting in the seat alone he would have been slouching a bit; which surely would have had the lap portion of the seatbelt over his abdomen. The shoulder strap would have draped behind his ear and along the right side of his neck. With this potential positioning of the adult/lap and shoulder seatbelt alone (without the assistance of the booster seat), there is no doubt in my mind Silas would have sustain severe if not life threatening injuries in this single vehicle roll over crash.

Again to reiterate, both of Silas' parents said that if the law had not just changed they would have probably not used the booster seat any longer since Silas was now 6 years of age and met the previous requirement to be out of a booster seat.

Another example of how progressive and evolving laws can make a difference.

Ofcr. Bret Barnum
Portland Police - Traffic Division



Rep. Vicki Berger

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2007 Legislative Report

Representative Vicki Berger

A Message from Representative Vicki Berger

Dear Friends -

During the 2007 Legislative Session although we faced many challenges, we were also fortunate to have more opportunities to improve state services and enact important reforms to ensure that state government works to the benefit of taxpayers.

Thanks to the hard work of Oregonians, your state government had nearly \$2.7 billion in additional revenues to spend this biennium without raising taxes. We used that money to:

- Help reduce class sizes
- Restore program cuts to K-12 education
- Hire 100 additional state troopers to bring us closer to restoring 24/7 highway patrols
- Boost our investment in community colleges and universities and
- Create a substantial Rainy Day Fund to protect state services from the next economic downturn.

On the recommendation of the Public Commission on the Oregon Legislature, we implemented a series of changes to the way the Legislature conducts business, including strict deadlines to complete our work and a February 2008 Session to deal with urgent issues. These changes resulted in the shortest regular Legislative Session since 1995.

While I am proud of these accomplishments, my number one priority is addressing your needs and concerns. This newsletter contains important information about my accomplishments this session, and how they may affect you.

I welcome your comments or questions regarding legislative issues that are important to you. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your State Representative ... it is an honor to represent you in the Legislature.

Sincerely,

Vicki
Helping my constituents is my number one priority. Call me at 503-986-1420



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Working for a More Accountable Government for Oregon

Vicki supported several bills to bring more accountability and common sense to state government, including the following:

Establishing a Rainy Day Fund

HB 2707 - Created Oregon's first Rainy Day Fund to protect funding for critical state services during economic downturns.

Using Plain Language, Not Jargon

HB 2702 - Requires state agencies to communicate in plain language instead of bureaucratic jargon.

Meeting Reasonable Deadlines

SCR 1 - Established – and met – firm deadlines for the legislature to complete its work.



Providing a Better Education

This session, our state had the largest budget in history and as a result, the Legislature was able to provide increased funding levels to many programs, several of which had seen cutbacks during leaner economic times. Thanks to hard working Oregonians, the additional revenue that Oregon experienced helped the Legislature to set a 2007-09 K-12 budget of \$6.25 billion, an 18 percent funding increase from last biennium.

This budget will allow school districts to:

- Restore program cuts enacted since the last recession
- Help reduce class sizes
- Continue to provide a quality education to Oregon's children

Vicki supported the efforts of the non-partisan Chalkboard Project to improve Oregon's public schools. Funded by Oregon's three largest private foundations, the Chalkboard Project believes we need to know where our education dollars go and worked to pass legislation to improve mentoring of new teachers.

In addition to these important issues, Vicki also supported HB 2263, a comprehensive overhaul of Oregon's educational testing requirements. The bill abolishes the CIM/CAM tests, and streamlines evaluation standards to reduce bureaucracy, but still maintain accountability in the classroom.

For more information: www.chalkboardproject.org

Oregon Kids, Workers Can Expect Better Access to Higher Education

All Oregon kids deserve a college education. To help with this, the legislature also voted to boost financial aid; in fact, it was doubled to \$106 million. This means that the average award amount was increased and eligibility was extended to 28 percent more Oregon college students in need. As someone who has worked so closely with higher education, Vicki knows how important this funding is to students.

She also supported efforts to expand successful programs throughout Oregon's community college system, and supported investments in new technologies at Oregon's universities.

During the interim, Vicki was appointed to serve on the Oregon Innovation Council (Oregon InC). This effort, led by successful Oregon venture capitalists, put forth a blueprint to leverage public sector higher education investments into future commercial enterprises. Legislation sponsored by Vicki will give Oregon an edge in the global marketplace for such innovations as energy from ocean waves, sustainable building technologies, food processing and communicable disease prevention. Oregon InC, positions Oregon to be competitive in the global race for new, high-paying private sector jobs.

For more information: www.oregoninc.org

Restore 24/7 OSP Coverage to Highways

As our traffic and population increase, Oregon State Police play a critical role in keeping our highways safe and moving. One of Vicki's top priorities during this session was restoring the patrol division to 24/7 coverage to ensure the safety of motorists and combat the flow of drugs through our state.

Vicki sponsored legislation which created a dedicated source of revenue to provide full patrol coverage but budget writers eventually agreed to a lower level of OSP funding which included hiring 100 additional troopers for our highways.



Vicki Leads Successful Effort to Update Oregon's Landmark Bottle Bill

Much has changed in the world since 1971 when Oregon introduced a landmark bottle bill to place a 5 cent deposit on pop and beer containers. Bottled water is quickly overtaking soda pop in popularity and with over 126 million plastic water bottles entering Oregon's waste stream in 2006, Vicki knew it was time to update this important legislation.



Vicki sponsored SB 707, a nickel deposit on water bottles that will help ensure that these containers are recycled and not just dumped in our landfills. An additional benefit is that local recyclers are anticipating adding new jobs in Oregon to process this consistent stream of recyclable plastic material.

Vicki recognized the need for this legislation and was the key figure in passing this legislation through both chambers.

A Priority for District 20: Transportation Infrastructure



Vicki worked hard this session and played a key role in coordinating state, local and federal efforts to get a new Willamette River bridge in the Salem area. Her meetings with ODOT officials, Polk County Commissioners and Salem City Council

members helped to keep momentum behind this long term project that is so important to Salem and the surrounding areas.

Vicki also worked to seek funding sources for the bridge and remind Oregon's federal delegation of the strategic importance of an East-West transportation corridor in the middle of the Willamette Valley.



Vicki Works to Make Prescription Drugs More Affordable & Protect Senior Programs

Senior citizens are a top priority. That's why Vicki voted to make prescription drugs more affordable by supporting legislation to expand access to the Oregon Prescription Drug Program. Many seniors are on fixed incomes and can't afford outrageous prescription drug costs along with other increasing medical costs.

To help protect seniors, Vicki fought cuts to vital programs such as Oregon Project Independence, which allows many seniors to receive care in their own home.

She also voted to approve enhanced funding for Area Agencies on Aging, which provides important long-term care programs to seniors. Finally, Vicki also voted to increase the quality of long-term care by boosting much-needed support to nursing facility staff.

VICKI BERGER: DEEP ROOTS IN OUR COMMUNITY

Vicki Berger has been a lifelong Salem resident and is a fourth generation Oregonian. A former small business owner, Salem Hospital Foundation member and Marion/Polk County CASA Board Member among other things, Vicki understands how important it is to be connected to her community and the people who live here.

Recognized by her peers as the 2001 Salem Co-First Citizen with her husband Jerry, she was also the first woman elected President of the Board of the Family YMCA of Marion/Polk Counties, an organization that has been in existence for over 150 years.

Vicki was elected as State Representative, District 20, in November 2002. Her first role as an elected official came when she was elected to the Salem-Keizer school board in 1988.

A product of Salem's public school system, Vicki works to build an education infrastructure that supports the next generation of children and keeps more money in the classroom. She has led efforts to stabilize funding, prevent cuts to education and make higher education more accessible and affordable for Oregon students.

Vicki and Jerry have three grown children and two wonderful grandsons.

