

Oregon House Democrats 2009 Roadmap for Oregon's Future



Charting Oregon's course through these turbulent times requires real leadership and a responsive state government willing to tackle challenges brought on by rising food and gas prices, failed federal policies, and the fallout stemming from the home mortgage crisis. Oregonians expect their Legislature to confront the tough issues of today by putting the interests of our children and families first as we invest in our future.

Our agenda is to establish an educational system second to none, create new family wage jobs, guarantee access to quality health care regardless of income, promote a healthy environment that focuses on combating climate change and reducing our dependence on foreign oil, and ensure that government is responsive and accountable to its citizens. In 2007 we began that journey. Now, as we approach the 2009 session we continue on course, moving Oregon forward.

House Democrats will move Oregon forward by putting children and families first.

In 2007/08 – House Democrats delivered on promises to put families first by passing a landmark \$6 billion K-12 public education budget, expanding access to Head Start, ending years of cuts to higher education and helping working families afford child care.

In 2009 -- House Democrats will further improve education, as well as focus our efforts on improving access to our community colleges and public universities.

- ⇒ Provide every Oregonian an opportunity to attend our state universities, community colleges or vocational schools by controlling tuition costs and expanding financial aid opportunities.
- ⇒ Help Oregon's combat veterans who are returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan so they have the support they and their families need to resume their lives.
- ⇒ Reduce the tax burden on Oregon's working families and small businesses by ensuring that corporations pay their fair share by addressing the \$10 corporate minimum tax.

House Democrats will work to create more family wage jobs in Oregon.

In 2007/08 – House Democrats invested in innovations to generate good paying jobs for more Oregonians. We made Oregon a national leader in renewable energy. We aided rural communities and agriculture by addressing future water and land use needs.

In 2009 – House Democrats will expand opportunities for working Oregonians through targeted investments, giving workers the skills they need to succeed in a globally competitive job market, and helping Oregonians weather the downturn in the national economy.

- ⇒ Create more good paying jobs for Oregonians by investing in worker training programs in skilled trades and growing industries.
- ⇒ Expand our targeted investments aimed at attracting jobs in Oregon's renewable energy and innovative technology sectors.
- ⇒ Reduce congestion on Oregon's roads to improve air quality, shorten commute times so parents have more time with their families, provide better emergency service and safely move goods by modernizing our out-of-date transportation system.

House Democrats will improve health care access and affordability.

In 2007/08 – The Legislature passed the Healthy Oregon Act, providing a blueprint for improving Oregon's health care system that lowers costs, improves quality and assures every Oregonian affordable health care. We also passed legislation paving the way for consumers to challenge insurance rate increases.

In 2009 - House Democrats will continue efforts to expand quality health care to more Oregonians, holding insurance companies accountable for their premium increases, and investing in cost-effective forms of health care delivery like school-based health clinics.

- ⇒ Increase accountability and transparency in the health care system by requiring health insurance companies to limit administrative spending and follow consistent pricing guidelines.
- ⇒ Fund in-home care programs, adult foster care and assisted living so that seniors and people with disabilities are not forced into more costly nursing homes.

House Democrats will work to keep our neighborhoods safe and secure.

In 2007/08 – House Democrats authorized hiring 139 new state troopers to make our highways safer, and passed laws making it easier for parents to protect their children from Internet predators.

In 2009 - House Democrats will continue our investment in providing 24-7 trooper coverage on Oregon highways, aggressively combating the impact of meth in our communities, and protecting Oregonians from being abused or ripped off.

- ⇒ Help Oregon's families by strengthening privacy protections and securing credit, banking, and medical information; protect future homeowners from fraudulent lending practices; and ban the sale of dangerous products such as toy-like cigarette lighters.
- ⇒ Crack down on the theft and illegal reselling of scrap metal, which is commonly used by meth abusers to support their addiction.
- ⇒ Protect seniors and our most vulnerable citizens from financial scams, fraud and sexual abuse by improved investigative processes, better court access and tougher penalties.

House Democrats will create a smarter and more accountable state government.

In 2007/08 - House Democrats passed Oregon's first Rainy Day Fund. We passed bills to cut red-tape, made the state's Administrative Rules process more efficient, expanded audits and implemented an on-line permitting system for the construction industry.

In 2009 – House Democrats will ensure that government is responsive and accountable to the needs of Oregonians, particularly during moments of crisis, and we will continue to be fiscally responsible.

- ⇒ Improve our ability to respond to a natural disaster, a terrorist attack or a public health crisis by upgrading state emergency plans, improving emergency communications and increasing protections for coastal communities.
- ⇒ Continue to manage the budget with fiscal responsibility by setting more money aside in the Rainy Day Fund to protect Oregon during future economic recessions.
- ⇒ Keep children safe by requiring better enforcement and training on mandatory child abuse reporting laws, and ensuring school districts screen new employees to keep those with a proven history of abuse away from students.

House Democrats: Leading Oregon Forward.

The issues facing Oregon -- from the failure of the federal government to live up to its obligations to challenges with our state economy – are immense, but not unmanageable. The policy priorities in this document represent commitments for action by House Democrats in the next legislative session, but are only a part of the broader discussion.

We pledge responsiveness, integrity and innovation as we work to create jobs and economic growth, combat climate change and respond to the needs of our children and most vulnerable citizens. We have not reached the end of our journey yet. In fact, we have just begun. But Oregon House Democrats are leading Oregon in the right direction.