



## Senate Republican Office

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## Senate Republicans announce “Real Solutions. Right Now.” agenda

*Focus is on jobs and healthcare for working families*

**Salem, OR** – Senate Republicans announced Thursday their 2009 legislative agenda, which focuses on creating family-wage jobs and affordable healthcare for Oregon’s working families. The *Real Solutions. Right Now.* agenda provides a vision for a stronger economy, safer streets, an efficient healthcare system and a government that is responsive and accountable to citizens.

“This is our vision for a better, safer and stronger Oregon,” said Senator Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day). “We want to help Oregon families move beyond paycheck-to-paycheck living, feel safe in their homes and have the security of quality, affordable healthcare. This agenda is about returning control of government back to Oregonians and a return to prosperity.”

The agenda contains proposals to:

- Put Oregonians to work managing state lands to keep forests green, create jobs, cut carbon emissions by reducing forest fires, and maximizing income to the Common School Fund to fund education.
- Store excess water from the Columbia River during rainy season to irrigate farmland and sell to water-poor states
- Dedicate 1% of Oregon’s budget to Oregon State Police so families are safe on the road and in their homes
- Increase penalties for drunk drivers and drivers with suspended licenses
- Enact strict penalties and zero-tolerance policies for child predators in schools
- Make safety-net health insurance available for all Oregon families
- Help employer’s offer Medical Individual Retirement Accounts to pay for basic medical needs like doctor visits and prescription drugs
- Implement real medical malpractice reform

The *Real Solutions. Right Now.* agenda puts a high priority on local, sustainable jobs that will help Oregonians make ends meet and save for the future. The Republican agenda will create over 7,000 new jobs while projecting the environment and positioning the state for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

“Oregon families struggling to afford gas, milk and healthcare should know that they are not alone,” said Senator Fred Girod (R-Lyons). “We can make Oregon’s economy strong again by getting back to the business of responsibly managing our abundant resources. It is good for the environment, good for the economy, and good for our schools.”

More and more of workers' paychecks are going to health insurance, while the number of uninsured continues to rise. Costs in Oregon have increased from \$16.8 billion in 2006 to \$19.3 billion 2008, and 576,000 Oregonians lack care. Insurance premiums have risen dramatically, hitting both individuals and small businesses.

"Every Oregonian can feel the pressure of skyrocketing insurance premiums, and it is time to do something more than just talk about it," said Senator Jackie Winters (R-Salem). "We want safety-net insurance that will give peace of mind to every family in the face of a medical emergency coupled with employer sponsored medical accounts that will empower the consumer to control spending. Oregonians also need common-sense reform to our litigation system to help curb escalating healthcare costs."

Taxpayers deserve to get a dollars worth of services for a dollar's worth of taxes, and government needs to be accountable to its citizens in order for that to happen. Oregonians are tired of cost over-runs, unrealized savings and a lack of accountability in government. Republicans will again introduce an independent, legislative Office of Government Accountability and Audits to serve as a watchdog on taxpayer dollars.

"Taxpayers should have confidence in the way government spends their money," said Senator Larry George (R-Sherwood). "In 1991, Salem had a budget of \$15 billion, today it is almost \$50 billion, a \$35 billion increase in just over 15 years. That is \$52,000 spent for every family of four in Oregon. Are we getting \$52,000 worth of benefit? Are our classrooms or streets any better off?"

Government's primary function is to ensure the safety of its citizens. That is why Senate Republicans are proposing a dedicated fund for Oregon State Police and increasing penalties on drunk drivers and sexual predators.

"No matter if Oregonians are in their homes, on the street or in school, they should feel safe and secure," said Senator Doug Whitsett (R-Klamath Falls). "That is why we are committed to dedicating a permanent funding source for the Oregon State Police and keeping criminals off our streets and out of our schools."

You can view the [Real Solutions. Right Now.](http://www.leg.state.or.us/press_releases/sro_073108.pdf) agenda online at [http://www.leg.state.or.us/press\\_releases/sro\\_073108.pdf](http://www.leg.state.or.us/press_releases/sro_073108.pdf).

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