

# OREGON SENATE DEMOCRATS

## February 2010 Agenda

*As Oregon pulls itself out of these tough economic times, Oregon Senate Democrats will continue to look out for the middle class and those working hard to get ahead. In the landmark 2009 Session, Senate Democrats delivered for Oregonians by making progress toward strong schools, accessible health care, economic security, and safe communities. While many states were immobilized by the global recession, Oregon has charted a different path to economic recovery – one that protects essential state services while protecting the middle class and small businesses.*

*Tough times mean state government cannot be all things to all people – we have to set priorities. During the February Special Session, Senate Democrats will renew their commitment to working in partnership with labor and business to protect the middle class and help get Oregon families back on track during these challenging times.*

### **Getting Oregonians Back to Work**

Last session, through our investments in transportation, infrastructure, health care, and affordable housing we created and maintained thousands of family-wage jobs in all 36 counties. In the February session, we will continue to prioritize preserving existing jobs, creating new jobs, and giving unemployed Oregonians new opportunities to return to the workforce. Senate Democrats will do this by:

- Supporting unemployed Oregonians by providing emergency benefits for an estimated 18,600 workers so they can feed their families while continuing to look for work
- Providing oversight and accountability over the 2009 session jobs packages to make sure our investments are putting Oregonians back to work
- Eliminating unreasonable barriers to obtaining employment

### **Supporting Small Businesses**

Small businesses are the economic backbone of our state. Thousands of general contractors, health care providers, and tradesmen and women will have work because of our initiatives to create jobs and protect small businesses from additional financial burdens during this recession. In February, we will continue to help Oregon employers rebuild their workforce and restore our vibrant economy by:

- Supporting community businesses by making it easier to access small business loan programs
- Removing barriers to small businesses' ability to provide access to affordable health insurance

### **Accountable and Transparent Government**

Just like families across Oregon, the Legislature must balance its checkbook and respond to changing needs. During February, Oregon Senate Democrats will continue to promote accountability and make sure that we are getting the greatest value out of every tax dollar while ensuring that state government is delivering services with maximum efficiency. Senate Democrats will accomplish this by:

- Modernizing state government to make it more responsive to Oregonians' needs and increasing financial accountability by referring annual sessions to voters
- Providing enhanced oversight over state agency operations to ensure taxpayers are getting the greatest value for every dollar spent