



Whisnant's Weekly

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Dear Friends,

The House and Senate gavels fell at 6:21 AM, Friday, August 5, 2005, ending the 73rd Legislative session. We worked from Thursday morning straight through for almost 24 hours; this session became the second longest in our state's history. As I return to District to continue serving you, I want to thank you for this opportunity to serve you in the Legislature. Thank you for your input on issues and bills. I thank you for your support and prayers; especially my home church, Sunriver Christian Fellowship, which prayed for me each week. Leyla Estes, my legislative assistant, was great and invaluable team member. Also, Woodie Thomas kept me up to date on the local issues and Sean Mazorol, Trevor Johnson, and Garret Wales were great interns. Of course, I could not have done this without Josie's support and love.

Best and hope to see you in district soon,

Gene

73rd Legislative Session

The House led the way on several important issues.

- The Legislature balanced the state budget for the 2005-07 biennium and held true to the House Republican commitment not to raise taxes. The Legislature followed through on its commitment to pass a state General Fund budget of \$12.393 billion - which is within the taxes Oregonians already pay.
- Schools will received adequate funding that will ensure a full school year, and in many cases, smaller class sizes and restoration of program cuts from the last few years. The K-12 budget for the 2005-2007 biennium is an increase of 8% over the past biennium.
- A package of bills to fight the meth epidemic passed both Chambers
- The House proposed and passed a package of bills to help our National Guard troops and Veterans.
- "ConnectOregon," a transportation infrastructure package was passed.
- Mental health parity was supported, making Oregon the 36th state to support the idea that mental health is just as important as physical health.
- Higher Education and Community Colleges were funded at higher levels than the Governor's recommended budget.
- Many senior services were fully funding, including Oregon Project Independence

In future newsletters, I'll highlight other 73rd Legislative Session accomplishments.

Work in the Interim

On Saturday morning, I'll be in Deschutes County Fair parade in Redmond and will attend the Fair to visit with people. After taking care of some home needs, I'll be attending the National Conference of State Legislatures in Seattle, Washington, in the middle of August. Then in September, I'll be traveling to Chicago to attend the National Youth Policy Conference. I will be scheduling town hall meetings as soon as possible to talk to you about the session and answer questions about what we did. I'll use this Weekly to keep you up-to-date.