

Oregon Dems tout mid-session accomplishments

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Salem—Democrats in the Oregon House of Representatives celebrated their accomplishments of the first half of the 2007 Legislative Session at a press conference Monday morning, saying the session had been more efficient and effective than previous sessions.

“We began this session by getting back to the basics of governing and restoring credibility and accountability to the Legislature,” said Speaker of the House Jeff Merkley (D-Portland). “That new tone and approach has reduced the bitter partisanship and gridlock that have plagued the Legislature over the last several years and resulted in a real problem-solving culture in Salem.”

Democrats noted that the first half of the 2007 session has resulted in the passage of a range of bills that have been blocked for decades such as bills creating a rainy day fund, requiring cigarettes to be “firesafe,” allowing working mothers unpaid breaks and privacy for breastfeeding while at work and requiring contraceptive equity and access to emergency contraception.

“Throughout my eight years of service in this body, I have seen good ideas supported by both Republicans and Democrats repeatedly squashed, stalled and set aside for another day, another year, another time,” said Speaker Pro Tempore Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland). “Today is a new day. A day when democracy is at work, debate is alive and Democrats and Republicans are coming together for the common good.”

Not only are bills previously stalled moving forward, but Democrats say the Legislature is working more efficiently and is on track to end its work by June 29, 2007 as promised.

“In all my time in the Legislature, I cannot think of a session when so much substantive policy has been accomplished so early in the session,” said House Majority Leader Dave Hunt (D-Clackamas County). “We still have a tremendous amount of work to accomplish in the next several weeks, but we are on the right track.”

In addition to a range of other policy proposals, House Democrats as part of the Roadmap for Oregon’s Future are committed to ending the session having made health care more affordable and accessible, reinvested in public schools and higher education, protected victims of rape and incest, added state troopers to Oregon’s highways to help combat the meth epidemic, made government more accountable to taxpayers and closed ethical and tax loopholes, and created new jobs for both the urban and rural economies.

[View a PDF of the House Democrats' Mid-Session Progress Report.](#)

