

Smith, Wyden set agenda for 110th Congress

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Oregon Senators Gordon Smith and Ron Wyden unveiled their sixth joint legislative agenda this week showing their firm commitment to advancing a bipartisan agenda for Oregon. The agenda sets out to preserve the county payments safety net, improve access to health insurance, and help build Oregon's economy. The agenda also addresses education, hunger, the Internet and funding for transportation projects.

"We're probably the only two home state Senators not arguing with each other," Smith said. "Oregonians want their representatives to get things done and that is what Ron and I try to do. We've set some important goals, we are going to keep pushing for solutions that work for Oregon."

"Fulfilling the nation's commitment to rural counties, protecting natural treasures like Mt. Hood, improving access to quality health care and guaranteeing educational opportunities for everyone - these are not Democratic or Republican goals," Wyden said. "These are Oregon goals, which is why for the last decade, Senator Smith and I have collaborated on an agenda that puts partisanship aside and puts Oregon first."

Since 1997, the Senators have unveiled their bipartisan agenda at the beginning of each new Congress after holding a series of joint town hall meetings throughout Oregon. The agenda has produced many successes for Oregon, including:

- Stopped Administration proposals to raise the Bonneville Power Administration electricity rates
- Secured the bulk of funding to construct the Oregon nanotechnology center
- Protected Medicaid funding that supported the Oregon Health Plan
- Created alternative energy tax incentives
- Advanced the Columbia River Channel dredging project
- Added a prescription drug benefit to Medicare

The Senate is likely to act soon on one agenda item, the Mt. Hood wilderness bill. The Senators proposal would protect 128,000 acres of wilderness on Mount Hood and in the Columbia River Gorge - an increase of almost 70 percent over existing wilderness protections.

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