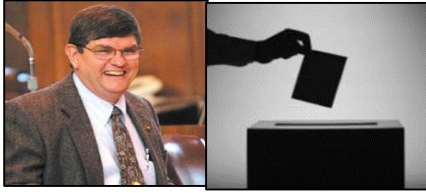




“No More Secret Bills”



Sen. Olsen: No more secret bills!

Senator Olsen's SB 435 would eliminate anonymous mystery bill amendments by requiring amendments to identify the state Legislator who proposed it. Anonymous legislation passing through the Legislature only reinforces the back-room deals aura of Salem and has the effect of shutting out the public who wish to know more, not less of their Democracy. The most controversial bill of the Session, the Low Carbon SB 324 (also referred to as a hidden gas tax) was amended in a surprise gut-stuff by an anonymous amendment. No one knows who the author is. Furthermore, without knowing who the amendment author means the public has no one to direct questions towards. There is no way to find the full intent or background behind an amendment that can such drastically change a piece of Legislation. It gets even worse when even the committee chair does not know the origin. At that point the process becomes unfriendly to all participants.

A similar bill in 2013 had over 60 sponsors which made it two thirds of the entire Legislative body. Yet the bill failed to move through the process.



Rep. Barreto: My real-life business a better model than paid sick leave plan

State Representative Greg Barreto offered an inside view on how his own business is doing things right with paid sick leave and why the state mandate may backfire by making things worse. During an informational hearing on HB

2005, which would mandate that Oregon employers provide paid sick leave to employees, Barreto discussed his company's already-existing benefit package.

Without a government mandate to do so, Barreto Manufacturing provides its 80 employees with full health insurance coverage at no cost to any employee. It provides 7 paid holidays, a 401(k) with Company match, and a profit sharing plan. Although paid sick time is not currently offered, Barreto allows any employee who misses work due to illness to come in on Saturdays – at 1.5 times their usual pay – to make up the lost wages.

Barreto noted that the scheme proposed in HB 2005 would cost his company a minimum of \$65,000 per year, but once higher paid employees were averaged in, he expected the total to be closer to \$100,000 a year. That is money that could otherwise go to creating full-time jobs for additional area residents.

“HB 2005 would cost his company a minimum of \$65,000 per year”

Government-mandated paid sick time is a hot-button issue in Salem at the moment, but it was clear from the hearing that employees are unlikely to gain any real benefit.

When Barreto asked a hearing witness whether it was a “fair proposition” to add up to \$100,000 in new costs to his business, he was told he would be able to convert existing paid vacation time to paid sick time – a net zero to workers – and clearly not the way that Representative Barreto appears to want to treat his employees.

Much of the debate over Paid Sick Leave is being driven by supporters who have never run a business and have dealt with the expenses of costly new regulations. This makes Barreto's inside view of a local small business a great real-world example of how things are done and the danger of over-regulation.



Rep. Sprenger: Cougars sightings near city schools renews call for action.

State Representative Sherrie Sprenger has introduced a bill to help keep Oregon safe from the rising threat of cougar attacks. Sprenger has introduced HB 3000 which directs the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife to create pilot program allowing hunters to use hounds in the pursuit of cougars.

State officials estimate that Oregon abounds with about 6,000 cats within the state. This number is double than what management objectives have called for.

Cougar increases are not just a rural Oregon danger, but recent cougar sightings in the Portland Metro area has suburban families in alarm.

Last year Hillsboro Police responded to a cougar sighting in a local park, two cougars were spotted roaming the streets in Oregon City and a cougar was captured and euthanized in a NE Portland neighborhood.

More threatening was a cougar sighting in near schools where a Happy Valley Elementary School was under alert as well as a Beaverton elementary school. The bear population has risen also, as the black bear population has risen by 40 percent since the statewide restrictions.

State Representative Sherrie Sprenger stated, “I have been working to pass legislation on this issue for several years now. Each year my concern for public safety grows and I hope this is the year that we can do something that works for Oregonians, in all areas of the state.”