From:	salem_update-bounces@lists.oregonstate.edu on behalf of Mills, Jock
To:	CAS DeanStaff; CAS Unit Leaders; Salem Update Listserv
Subject:	[Salem Update] Rep. Gelser E-Newsletter: Upcoming Events,Session Assignments, College Savings Plan and Vulnerable Victims
Date:	Monday, January 05, 2009 10:47:22 AM
Attachments:	ATT14204494.txt

This update from State Representative Sara Gelser (D-Corvallis) provides information about a number of meetings that may be of interest to you, including two town hall meetings this week:

- Thursday, January 8, 7pm, Venetian Theatre in Albany: **Jobs and Economy Townhall** with Rep. Andy Olson, Senator Frank Morse and Rep. Sara Gelser.
- Saturday, January 10, 10am, Grace Lutheran Church in Corvallis: **Presession Town Hall with Rep. Gelser** (refreshments provided)

In addition, both Representative Gelser and Senator Frank Morse (R-Albany) will attend this Thursday's Faculty Senate meeting. These meetings are open to the public:

- Thursday, January 8, 3:00 PM at LaSells Stewart, Engineering Hall

More to come in the next day or two regarding legislative efforts aimed at infrastructure funding, and the reaction to the 529 meltdown.

Jock

From: Rep. Sara Gelser [mailto:rep.saragelser@state.or.us]
Sent: Sunday, January 04, 2009 9:40 PM
To: Mills, Jock
Subject: Rep. Gelser E-Newlsetters: Upcoming Events, Session Assignments, College Savings Plan and Vulnerable Victims

(view this email as a web page)

"All of us might wish at times that we lived in a more tranquil world, but we don't. And if our times are difficult and perplexing, so are they challenging and filled with opportunity."

~ Robert Kennedy

One week from today, on January 12, the 75th Legislative Assembly will convene. The agenda for 2009 is full, and will include challenging discussions about the economy, health care, climate change, land use planning, education, and our most critical human service programs. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass sound legislation that moves Oregon towards a brighter future, and that provides immediate necessary assistance to Oregon's struggling families.

As I enter my fourth year of service in the Legislative Assembly, I am grateful to you for the opportunity to work here. My door continues to be open to you. In the months ahead, I hope you will contact me freely with your questions, concerns and ideas.

There are two opportunities this week to share your ideas with me. I will be hosting a **Town Hall on Jobs and the Economy** with Rep. Andy Olson and Senator Frank Morse this Thursday, January 8 at 7pm in Albany. In addition, I will be hosting a **Session Overview and Community Discussion** at 10am this Saturday, January 10, at Grace Lutheran Church in Corvallis. Please see the end of this newsletter for more details about these and other upcoming events.

Leadership and Committees

During the 2009 Session, I will continue to serve as **Assistant Majority Leader**. My responsibilities are focused on policy development, and helping to strategically position good legislation for passage through both chambers.

In December, Speaker-designee Dave Hunt announced committee assignments for the upcoming session. I was pleased to be named **Chair of the House Committee on Education**. This committee is responsible for policy related to early childhood, K-12, community colleges and the Oregon University System. My five years of service on the Corvallis School Board will be very helpful to me in this new leadership position.

I was also appointed to the **House Rules Committee**. This committee handles measures related to election reform and campaign finance. It is also the committee that is often used to handle difficult and controversial measures, particularly towards the end of the legislative session. It is a challenging and diverse committee, and I am grateful for the opportunity to serve there.

Finally, I was asked to continue my service on the **Revenue Committee** which of course looks at all tax policy and tax measures. This will be a very important committee this session, as we grapple with our state's fiscal crisis. Unfortunately, because of scheduling conflicts, I will not be able to continue my service on the Health Care and Human Services Committees. These are areas that I am very passionate about, and many of my own bills will be moving through those committees. I plan to remain actively engaged in policy discussions in these areas, and hope you will continue to contact me about your concerns about these topics.

2009 Staff and Offices

I am grateful to have a super-star staff for the 2009 session. Many of you know **Kris Skaro** who has been working with me for the past year and a half. Kris's legal training and sharp critical thinking skills make her an impressive policy guru, and I have heard from all of you how great she is with constituent case work. Before I persuaded her to come to my office, she worked with Speaker-Designee Dave Hunt. Kris will continue on as my Chief Legislative Aide.

Kris will be joined by **Kim Forrest**, who will serve as a Legislative Assistant. Kim hails from Eugene and her experience includes work for Jeff Merkley for US Senate, Senator Patty Murray, and a campaign consulting firm out of Washington State. Kim is smart, well organized, and very approachable. I think you will enjoy getting to know Kim, and I know she will be a great addition to our office.

If you come to visit me at the Capitol, you will also notice that the Capitol Restoration is complete. We are now in office H-285, which is right next to the Caucus Office. Kris, Kim and I can all still be reached at the same email address (rep.saragelser@state.or.us) and phone number 503-986-1416.

In the mean time, you can meet Kris and Kim at my presession Town Hall, which will be at 10am this Saturday, January 10 at Grace Lutheran Church in Corvallis.

Oregon College Savings Plan

As many of you are aware, one of the victims of the economy is the Oregon College Savings Plan. The plan suffered significant losses in large part due to the poor performance of an Oppenheimer portfolio. As a result, a majority of the plan's investors have seen their portfolios decline to a level lower than their original investment.

Oregon families are left wondering what happened and what they should do next. Families who have seen substantial declines in their savings for their children's future are right to demand answers, and look for smart ways to recover their investment.

Within the first two weeks of the Legislative session, I will be holding a hearing in the House Education Committee about the Oregon College Savings Plan. The goal of the hearing will be to get a full presentation of the facts of the challenge, to look at how Oregon compares to other college savings plans across the county, and to learn more about how Oregon's plan stacks up to other states in terms of oversight. We will also be asking the panelists for an update about their plans for the future, and their recommendations to families

worried about how to pay college tuition for their children. I will also be opening the hearing to public testimony. The following week, the Revenue Committee will continue the discussion as it begins to delve into the more technical financial aspects of the plan.
(You can compare Oregon's plan to other states online, by visiting savingforcollege.com)
The hearings will be broadcast live over the internet, and audio recording of the hearings will be also be available online. If you would like to be informed of the date and time of the hearings once they are firmly set, please send me an email so that we can get that information to you in a timely fashion.

2009 Legislative Agenda

In upcoming newsletters, I will share more information with you about the bills I am sponsoring, as well as major legislation moving through the building. Today, I'll briefly highlight one of my priority bills.

Vulnerable Victims

For over a year now, I have been working on legislation to address the disturbing rate of abuse against vulnerable adults, including those with physical and developmental disabilities, the elderly and those with mental illness. Even though these individuals are among those most likely to be victims of crime, the crimes are rarely reported and even more rarely prosecuted. According to reports in the *Oregonian* in late 2007, one in five adults with a developmental disability experienced a significant incident of abuse or neglect between 2000 and 2007. These types of incidents included:

- Binding a victim with duct tape to control behaviors
- Hitting victim on the forehead with open palm while the victim was using the toilet
- Forcefully kissing the victim on the mouth and forcefully touching the buttocks
- Use of attack dogs and cold showers to control the behaviors of adult clients with developmental disabilities

According to statistics offered by the Oregon State Office of Investigations and Training, in 2006 they reported 660 cases of abuse that they believed rose to the level of a crime to local law enforcement agencies. According to their statistics, local law enforcement responded in only about 71 (or 15%) of these cases. This rate of response is consistent over several years. As a result, paid caregivers who may be fired for abusive actions are not prosecuted. Without a criminal record, they can be rehired again by other organizations to work with vulnerable adults at risk of being abused.
The 2009 Protecting Vulnerable Adults Act seeks to improve the safety of vulnerable adults in our communities. It will create county multi-disciplinary teams that will improve the communication and responsiveness between the public safety system and the human service systems. When Massachusetts moved to this model, they were able to substantially increase their prosecution rate of those who preyed on the most vulnerable of their citizens. It also helped to shift the focus of the discussion to one of public safety. Vulnerable adults

have a right to expect safety in their communities, and to have access to the criminal justice system when they are victims of crime.

The bill also creates new consumer protection mechanisms that will help vulnerable individuals and their loved ones know when abuse has occurred in the place they live. This will help prevent future abuse, and ensure that steps are taken to stop abuse before it occurs. They will also have access to information about the history of abuse in foster and group homes so that consumers can make wise choices about where to purchase services.

Finally, the bill will improve Oregon's outdated adult abuse statutes. It will ensure that seniors, people with physical and developmental disabilities and those with mental illness can count on a high quality, uniform system of investigation no matter where they live in the state. It will allow the Department to substantiate allegations of neglect when there is a likelihood that the actions will lead to harm, instead of requiring that the victim first experience significant harm. It will also provide protections to those vulnerable adults who are living in their own homes or family homes, by providing protective service resources to vulnerable adults not living in foster care or group homes.

This is a comprehensive bill that is the result of months of collaboration with dozens of individuals representing a variety of stakeholder groups. I believe it will significantly advance the issue of safety for the most vulnerable adults in our community, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass this critical piece of legislation.

Kids in the Capitol

During the Legislative Session, the House offers an Honorary Page Program for young people age 12 and older. Pages help pass messages to members on the House floor, and also provide assistance in Legislative offices. Here is what Ryan, one of my pages from last year, had to say about the experience:

"[When] I was an honorary page, I got to go on the floor of the House of Representatives while they were in session. My job was to take notes to different representatives. I also took a big tour of the Capitol building. In the afternoon I got to work in Representative Gelser's office. I had a lot of fun."

If you know a young person who would like to be a Page, please contact my office and I will be happy to be a sponsor!

Younger students (generally grade 3 and above) can participate in the excellent field trip opportunities to the Capitol. I have also enjoyed hosting high school students needing to complete a job shadow experience during the school year. Please contact my office for more information about how to get your student or child involved in the legislative session!

Mark Your Calendar

(For more information about each of these events, please see the end of this newsletter)

7pm, Thursday, January 8, Venetian Theatre in Albany: **Jobs and Economy Townhall** with Rep. Andy Olson, Senator Frank Morse

and Rep. Sara Gelser.
10am, Saturday, January 10, Grace Lutheran Church in Corvallis: **Presession Town Hall with Rep. Gelser** (refreshments provided)
Monday, January 12: **Opening Day of the 75th Legislative Assembly**
Wednesday, January 21, CH2M Hill Alumni Center: **Celebrate Corvallis!**
7pm, Tuesday, February 3, Grace Lutheran Church in Corvallis: **Mental Health Town Hall with Rep. Gelser**
7pm, Thursday, February 5, Corvallis Public Library: **Health Care Forum** (sponsored by Mid-Valley Health Care Advocates)
10am, Saturday, February 7, Corvallis Public Library: **Legislative Town Hall** (sponsored by the League of Women Voters)
9-10am, Saturday, February 21, Sunnyside Up in Corvallis: **Informal Coffee with Rep. Gelser**
9-10am, Saturday, March 1, Sunnyside Up in Corvallis: **Informal Coffee with Rep. Gelser**

Newsletters

I plan to send this e-newsletter out about every 2 weeks. You can look to it for information about upcoming hearings, bills moving to the floor, and updates on the 2009 Legislative session. If you have suggestions for how to improve this newsletter, please be sure to let us know!
If you do not wish to be on this e-newsletter list, you can unsubscribe by clicking the link at the bottom of the email.

Details on Upcoming Events

Jobs and Economy Town Hall with Rep. Andy Olson, Senator Frank Morse and Rep. Sara Gelser
Rep. Andy Olson invited Senator Morse and I to join him for a pre-session Town Hall on Jobs and the Economy this **Thursday, January 8**. It will be held at 7pm at the Venetian Theatre in downtown Albany.
2009 Session Overview and Feedback Session with Rep. Sara Gelser
I will be hosting a Town Hall to provide an overview of the 2009 session and my legislative priorities on **Saturday, January 10** from 10:00-11:30am at Grace Lutheran Church in Corvallis. This is also an opportunity for you to share your questions, concerns and ideas and to meet Kris and Kim. There will be plenty of time for questions and discussion. Refreshments will be provided.
Mental Health Town Hall
I will be hosting a Town Hall focused on mental health services in Oregon and in our community. The agenda is still being finalized, but it will primarily focus on community based mental health services. The meeting will also include special guest speakers, information about the impact of the Governor's

Proposed Budget on community based mental health services, an update on the new State Hospital, the PSRB siting process in Oregon, and new developments in local community mental health services. The meeting will be held at 7pm on Tuesday, February 3 at Grace Lutheran Church in Corvallis.

Health Care Forum

On Thursday, February 5, I will participate in a Health Care Forum sponsored by Mid-Valley Health Care Advocates. Along with other legislative leaders, I will be speaking about expectations of the 2009 Legislative Session and particularly about discussions related to the implementation of the Oregon Health Fund Board's report. The meeting will be held on Thursday, February 5 at 7pm at the Corvallis Public Library.

League of Women Voters Town Hall

The League of Women Voters will kick off its traditional series of Legislative Town Hall Meetings on Saturday, February 7 at 10am at the Corvallis Public Library. These Town Halls are moderated by the LWV, and feature legislators representing the greater Benton County Area. There is always time for audience questions.

Legislative Coffee Series

I will hold several informal coffee meetings during the 2009 session on Saturday mornings. These are informal opportunities to share ideas and information over coffee. The first two coffees are scheduled and will be:
Saturday, February 21. 9:00-10:00am at Sunnyside Up in Corvallis
Saturday, March 14 9:00-10:00am at Sunnyside Up in Corvallis

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