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## **Congressional Budget Is Good News for Oregonians**

Statement by OCPP Policy Analyst Janet Bauer

The budget Congress approved today contains good news for Oregonians. It bolsters ongoing efforts to invest in people and the economy while setting the stage to reduce the nation's deficits.

With today's action, Congress has reversed a trend of declining investments in the country's physical and social infrastructure. The budget for 2010 provides \$530 billion for non-defense "discretionary" programs, those whose funding must be approved each year. This amount is a 6 percent increase over the current year in an area of the budget that had been shrinking in recent years.

While Congress still has to decide how to divide these funds among the various domestic programs, it is now clear that lawmakers will have the means to begin rebuilding programs that make a huge contribution to the well-being of Oregonians.

Examples of programs that could see a boost are Head Start, K-12 and higher education, vocational and adult education, child care, employment and training, foster care, housing, low-income home energy assistance, public safety, juvenile justice, drinking water safety, environmental protection and various child, school and senior nutrition programs.

Investments in such programs would reinforce current efforts to spur the economy. They create or preserve jobs in the public and private sectors and put money in the pockets of those who spend it quickly, thus providing good stimulus "bang for the buck."

The budget also demonstrates fiscal responsibility by rejecting tax breaks exclusively for the very wealthy. In particular, it assumes that the federal estate tax will be extended at 2009 levels rather than being reduced or eliminated.

Through its budget plan, Congress has sensibly chosen to prioritize investing in the nation and reining in deficits.