

## The Oregonian

### Republican radio ad slams House Democrat on kicker

**Politics - While lambasting David Edwards, Republicans agree to put the corporate refund in a rainy day fund**

Friday, March 02, 2007

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The Oregonian

SALEM -- House Republicans launched a radio ad this week slamming the Democrat who led the fight to withhold corporate tax rebates -- the same move endorsed by Republicans just 24 hours later.

Also jumping into the fray is the anti-tax group FreedomWorks, which sent postcards attacking Democrats who had pushed to send all the corporate kicker refund to state coffers for a rainy day savings account.

Republicans had pushed to divert a smaller amount.

On Wednesday, Republicans and Democrats agreed to cancel nearly all the 2007 corporate kicker for a rainy day fund.

But the deal -- scheduled for a formal vote next week -- hasn't stopped the parties from fighting.

Democrats have charged that Republicans leaked legislators' official photos for FreedomWorks to use, which they say violates state laws prohibiting the use of public money for campaign activities.

"I have never heard of this kind of campaign attack in the middle of session," said House Majority Leader Dave Hunt, D-Gladstone. "They are attacking us based on something they have now endorsed."

House Minority Leader Wayne Scott, R-Canby, said he hadn't heard of FreedomWorks' mailers until a reporter told him. Scott did confirm, however, that the radio commercial against Rep. David Edwards, D-Hillsboro, had been paid for by the House Republicans campaign arm. He denied a link between the radio ads and the postcards.

Through his spokesman, Nick Smith, Scott defended the Republicans' stance. Republican leaders want to withhold the kicker, Smith said, but they offset that by offering estate tax breaks and other moves.

"If you look at the agreement as a whole," Smith said, "it's a win for Oregon."

The radio ad claims Edwards, a freshman who took a seat vacated by a Republican, voted to increase taxes by more than \$270 million when state government has more money than it's had in years. The commercial also chides him for voting on ethics reform rather than working on school funding, and it asks listeners to call his office to complain.

They did.

Edwards said he has received about 100 messages, most of them negative.

"Clearly the campaign is premeditated and a woefully unjustifiable attack on my character," Edwards said. "It's clearly designed to mislead and confuse my constituents on my vote on the rainy day fund."

The postcards mailed by FreedomWorks follow the same script as the radio ad, targeting Edwards and five other Democrats in competitive districts.

The cards warn voters that in the next few months, the Democrats "could vote" to raise another \$1 billion in new taxes. That estimate comes from several bills, including a sales tax proposal sponsored by five House Republicans, three Senate Democrats and one Senate Republican.

"You'd be laughing too . . . if you weren't paying the bill," states one mailer with a photo of Rep. Betty Komp, D-Woodburn. Other lawmakers targeted are Reps. Mike Schaufler, Chuck Riley, Chris Edwards and E. Terry Beyer.

FreedomWorks is based in Washington, D.C., and headed by former U.S. House Majority Leader Dick Armey and connected to anti-tax activist Grover Norquist. In the past, the Oregon branch has successfully helped to overthrow Republicans and Democrats who voted for tax increases.

Oregon director Russ Walker declined to say whether FreedomWorks will go after Scott and other Republicans, but he didn't shy from complaining about the plan.

"There will be consequences for all legislators," Walker said.

Late Thursday, House Speaker Jeff Merkley, D-Portland, sent a letter to Senate President Peter Courtney and Scott, saying that several photos used in the FreedomWorks' postcards came from official photos snapped of legislators on opening day. Limited copies of the photos exist, with Scott holding a courtesy copy.

Merkley asked both offices to investigate any leaks. Scott's spokesman declined to comment, saying Scott had not seen the letter.

Shawn Cleave, spokesman for the Oregon Republican Party, acknowledged that party members have opened themselves to attack from their traditional allies.

"But the bottom line is the Democrats hold the governor's office, the Senate and the House," Cleave said, "and we need to pick our battles and do what we can while we're in the minority."

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