

**Education in Oregon Town Hall - Rep. Jeff Barker (D-Aloha)**

Beaverton – July 14, 2010

Rep. Sara Gelser (D-Corvallis) & Dan Lucas

**Rep. Sara Gelser – Chair of the Oregon House Education Committee**

Dan Lucas	In the last session, you both ( <i>Rep. Barker &amp; Rep. Gelser</i> ) voted to cut the State School Fund by \$150 million and then you gave \$330 million of growth money to DHS. What was it in DHS that warranted that money above and beyond what the schools were getting cut?
Rep. Gelser	<p>And I'm happy to start with that one, actually, just as a piece of background, I came to the legislature with two specific interests: education and being on the Human Services Committee.</p> <p>I was on the school board (<i>Corvallis School Board, 2001-2006</i>) but I also worked for the Department of Human Services (<i>DHS policy analyst</i>), and I have a very strong interest in service to seniors and especially to people with developmental disabilities.</p> <p><b>Obfuscation attempt #1 - it's, ah, Federal Matching Funds...</b></p> <p>What you see in that increase in spending to the Department of Human Services as you look at those total funds are the matching funds that came from the federal government.</p>
Dan Lucas	This is just General Fund and Lottery Fund.
Rep. Gelser	<p><b>Obfuscation attempt #2 – HUGE aging population...</b></p> <p>If you look at General Fund and Lottery Fund, the percentages of, of the budget remain roughly equal, but if you look at moving forward with the Department of Human Services, one of the things that is going to continue putting pressure on the budget, moving forward, is our revenues continue to be less than what we need as the baby boomer population, moving forward.</p> <p>We have more and more and more aging individuals that need services in their homes. The challenges for the Department of Human Services is how do you, both, most humanely manage and cost effectively manage services to this population of people.</p> <p>You can spend much less money to support the person living in your home without providing some of those in-home supports, there is an entitlement to a nursing home, which is extraordinarily expensive, it can be \$260-\$300 per day.</p> <p>So that is an enormous pressure that continues to build in the Human Services budget. It moves towards a crisis and that is something that we're wanting to figure out how to grapple with. How do you manage...</p>
Dan Lucas	So, the elderly...is that all six divisions of DHS?

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Rep. Gelser	That is Seniors and People with Disabilities ( <i>division - SPD</i> ) and that is the most case-load driven... ( <i>SPD is one of the six divisions</i> )
Dan Lucas	But all six divisions had their budget increased. All six divisions of DHS for a total of \$330 million while the State School Fund was cut for a \$150 million. So my question is <u>what was more important than schools that caused that huge growth in DHS?</u>
Rep. Gelser	<p style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center;"><b>Obfuscation attempt #3 – anecdotal child welfare...</b></p> <p>I think that if you look at what happened in DHS, we still did not adequately fund in-home support services, in-home care services, we have, on a daily basis, hundreds of children with developmental disabilities that we move to foster care or nursing homes because the only way they can get access to the medical services they need is for their parents to give up custody of them.</p> <p>We have kids in our child welfare system where the caseloads for child welfare workers are so high that you aren't having face-to-face visits that you need to have and you see the types of tragedies like <i>Annette B. Coles (?)</i>, or I worked on a bill in Corvallis called Karly's Law that had to do with a 3-year old that was murdered.</p> <p style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center;"><b>Chair of House Education Committee now <b>admits schools are used as budget hostages</b> – because "there are tremendous needs within DHS, and unfortunately within DHS you don't have that consistent level of advocacy that you do for K-12 schools.", and "Everyone connects to K-12 schools in some way."</b></p> <p><b><u><a href="#">There are tremendous needs within the Department of Human services, and unfortunately within the Department of Human Services you don't have that consistent level of advocacy that you do for K-12 schools.</a></u></b></p> <p><b><u><a href="#">Everyone connects to K-12 schools in some way.</a></u></b></p> <p><b><u><a href="#">There aren't tremendous advocacy and powerful groups for these children, the disabled and elderly.</a></u></b></p> <p><b><u><a href="#">Elderly have a little bit more power out there with AARP and others.</a></u></b></p> <p>But I dispute, and, <u>I read your article</u>, and I dispute the idea of that shift in money, I don't serve on the Ways and Means Committee, so I can't speak for them...</p> <p><small>Link to article: <a href="http://oregoncatalyst.com/3310-Looking-at-budget-games-the-Legislature-plays.html">http://oregoncatalyst.com/3310-Looking-at-budget-games-the-Legislature-plays.html</a></small></p>

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Dan Lucas	<p>But, if you look at the budget, the State School fund was cut by \$150 million and DHS grew by \$330 million, <u>I don't know how else you can look at that.</u></p> <p>And it was all six divisions of DHS that grew, it wasn't just one division, it was all six divisions.</p>
Rep. Gelser	<p>Well, and, I know how to contact you, so let me look into that and I'll be happy to talk with Representative (<i>Peter</i>) Buckley (<i>D-Ashland</i>) and get a more precise answer about the mechanics of the budget, I do not serve on the budget committee.</p>

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Between You and Sara Gelsler



**Sara Gelsler** July 14 at 10:36pm Report

Hi Dan, I checked out your website but am having trouble finding the sourced version of your article. I remember seeing it before, but can't seem to put my fingers on it now. Would you mind sending me the appropriate link?

It was nice to meet you this evening. I'm sure we will cross paths again.

Sincerely,  
Sara



**Dan Lucas** July 15 at 6:48am

Hi Sara,

It was nice meeting you as well.

From my web site, it's the 6/8 "Looking at budget games the Legislature plays - published on Oregon Catalyst" link on the "In The News" tab.

From my Facebook fan page, it's the "(6/8/2010) Updated Oregon's dirty little budget secret Op-ed with sources & research detail" link on the Media tab.

I really appreciate your looking into how the increases to DHS were allocated and what necessitated those increases.

Thanks,

Dan

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Between You and Sara Gelser

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 **Sara Gelser** July 28 at 7:27pm [Report](#)

Hi Dan,

I'm sorry for the delay in getting the information to you that we discussed at Rep. Barker's forum two weeks ago. I've gathered most of the info I promised you, and just need a couple more days to do some verification

I hope to have a product to you by the middle of next week. Thanks for your patience with my tardiness!

Sara

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***As of January 31, 2011, six months later, Rep. Sara Gelser still hasn't provided the information.***

***Update: June 7, 2012 – never did receive the information from Rep. Sara Gelser.***