

# The Oregonian

## Saxton backs Head Start expansion

**Election - The GOP gubernatorial candidate says finding efficiencies would cover costs**

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Republican Ron Saxton on Monday rushed to join Democratic Gov. Ted Kulongoski in calling for a \$40 million expansion of Head Start to cover all eligible low-income children.

Saxton announced his support for full funding of the preschool program -- long sought by educators who see it as an important way to help more children succeed in school -- the day before Kulongoski was scheduled to promote his own support for Head Start.

However, the two differed on how they would pay for the expanded program, just as they did last week when they both said they would bolster the Oregon State Police.

Kulongoski's campaign said he wants to raise the \$10 minimum income tax on corporations to help expand Head Start. Saxton's campaign said he would pay for it by finding efficiencies in state government.

Kulongoski spokeswoman Anna Richter Taylor noted that the corporate minimum had not been changed since the 1930s. Felix Schein, Saxton's campaign manager, countered that his candidate believed there was enough money in state government to cover priority programs.

Kulongoski wants an auto insurance surcharge to help pay for state police while Saxton says new taxes are not necessary.

For Head Start, the state currently covers about 60 percent of eligible children. Full funding would make room for some 3,300 additional children.

The nonprofit Children's Institute of Portland today will launch a "Ready for School" campaign to expand Head Start that will be attended by Kulongoski.

Saxton said in a statement that he will make Head Start a priority because it "provides students with much greater opportunity for success -- both in school and in life -- by giving them basic learning skills during their most critical developmental years."

Kulongoski included Head Start expansion in his own education plan, saying it will help students succeed and lower future costs "associated with social safety net services."

Schein said Saxton would not attempt to prevent children of illegal immigrants from enrolling in Head Start, something that a Supreme Court ruling would prohibit in any case.

"We're not going to use Head Start as a way to crack down on immigration," said Schein.