

# Opinion: Let's work to revive Oregon and rekindle hope

By [Guest Columnist](#) Updated Dec 02, 2020; Posted Dec 02, 2020



April 8, 2020 Beth Nakamura/Staff

## **Christine Drazan**

*Drazan, Oregon House Republican Leader, represents District 39-Canby.*

The coronavirus crisis remains serious and will require our best efforts to combat COVID-19 and safeguard public health. The pandemic will come to an end through science and medicine, not the rhetoric of those who use the disease to divide.

As we care for our most vulnerable, it is critical that we work together to repair the damage we will see in our communities for years to come.

We're now eight months in, and far too many Oregonians remain unemployed or underemployed. Many more will join them as employers already teetering on the brink close their doors permanently as a result of Gov. Kate Brown's extended closures and restrictions.

Oregonians directly impacted by these shutdowns tell me every day they have used up their savings. There are no more loans. Additional unemployment benefits are expiring. They are scared. Hopeless even.

This is not the time for political maneuvers to push a partisan agenda with aggressive mandates and taxes that drive up costs. Instead, we must step up and do all we can to help struggling Oregonians. While the state's own reserves are flush, it is important to remember that this crisis isn't about the state. It's about people who have been singled out and harmed by the state. They are running out of options and need our help.

There could be no greater risk to our future, no larger challenge to overcome than hopelessness—whether it is in the heart of an individual or the vacant main streets where hope and opportunity once thrived.

Oregon House Republicans will fight to restore hope, rekindle opportunity, protect public health and support Oregonians who are struggling by advocating for these principles:

- **Support families and kids**—Return to in-person instruction as soon as it is safe to do so, while encouraging learning pods and cohort options for students not succeeding online.
- **Prioritize mental health**—Lower barriers and expand access to mental health services to stem rising depression and suicide rates.
- **Help hardworking Oregonians make ends meet**—Review legislation for its financial impact on Oregonians, to ensure the Legislature does not pass bills that make it harder to keep folks housed and employed.
- **Restore jobs**—Provide targeted supports for businesses and reduce business fees-to put more people on payroll and leave fewer waiting on unemployment.

- **Expand training**—Train unemployed Oregonians with the skills they need to succeed; by increasing access to career technical education and community colleges.
- **Cut red-tape**—Suspend agency rule-making not directly related to public health and safety.
- **Live within our means**—Balance the state’s budget responsibly, prioritize core state functions; and cut unsustainable spending.
- **Stop predatory lawsuits**—Pass COVID-19 liability protections for schools, nonprofits and businesses, while ensuring workers are served by a stable workers compensation system.
- **Restore checks and balances**—Pass bipartisan legislation to improve accountability and limit emergency powers.

Oregon’s public health response has been the state’s central focus and we will continue to work together to keep Oregonians safe. But now is the time for steady, bipartisan leadership to ensure our economic and social support response is equally robust. We must work together to address the damage which has harmed so many Oregonians, that, if left unanswered, will threaten not only stability and safety, but optimism and hope.

The commitment to solve problems, the willingness to set aside differences and tackle this moment together is required of all of us, if we are to restore the promise of our state and hope in the hearts of her people, in the months and years to come.

### **Share your opinion**

Submit your essay of 500-600 words on a highly topical issue or a theme of particular relevance to the Pacific Northwest, Oregon and the Portland area to [commentary@oregonian.com](mailto:commentary@oregonian.com). Please include your email and phone number for verification.