

Budget

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"I believe this budget strategy is prudent and will be well supported by Oregonians," Kitzhaber said. "It allows us, even in the face of a revenue decline, to maintain services such as nursing home care and highway patrol."

The proposal has received some criticism because Kitzhaber's increased spending may decrease the chance Oregonians will receive kicker rebate checks in the mail.

OUS officials and University administrators were attending a State Board of Education meeting in Portland when the budget was released and were not available for direct comment. In statements re-

leased later, however, they expressed their gratitude for Kitzhaber's new funding plan.

"The governor shares our vision for access for Oregonians," University President Dave Frohnmayr said. "I hope this commitment to restoring our budget is just a beginning."

OUS Chancellor Joe Cox said he was encouraged by the bipartisan

support for higher education.

But Rep. Betsy Close, R-Albany, who serves on the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education, said while she was pleased to see the governor restoring some of his previous cuts, she believed he could have directed more money toward opportunity grants.

She also said she doubted whether placing the kicker in

question is a good idea at this stage in the budget process.

"The concern is once you open that door, it's a raid on kicker money," she said.

The kicker is an income tax surplus refund that may be issued by the state department of revenue.

A fellow member on the education subcommittee, Rep. Kurt

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