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Contact: Dondrea Warner email: onsnews@rmci.net

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Special Session Underway

Cuts #94, #95, & #96—Salem—Hundreds of Oregonians from across the state are joining lawmakers at the Capitol today as the special session gets underway. Comments from Bentley Gilbert with the public employees union *SEIU Local 503*, Liz Smith with *Children First for Oregon*, and Elizabeth Byers with the *Oregon Health Action Campaign*.

Suggested Script: Legislators are meeting in a special session at the Capitol in Salem today to determine how to deal with Oregon's budget shortfall. And they have lots of company. Hundreds of Oregonians are also there who say they want to remind lawmakers that budget decisions have human consequences. Bentley Gilbert with one of the largest public employees unions in the state (SEIU Local 503) says everyone has a stake in the outcome.

Actuality Cut #94 (TRT :15) "There are some real people who are behind the numbers that the legislators are looking at on their balance sheets. There's been a lot of talk about how much the deficit is, but we think there's been very little appreciation and awareness of the human beings who would be affected by the cuts."

Anti-hunger advocates say they'll host a "bake sale" at the Capitol to bring attention to proposed cuts to the food stamp outreach budget. Liz Smith is with *Children First for Oregon*.

Actuality Cut #95 (TRT :22) "Food stamps are a federal program that bring federal dollars back to Oregon. It just doesn't make sense to cut new, potential clients who could then bring those federal dollars and spend them in their local grocery stores. (:12) About half of the people on food stamps in Oregon are kids. The food stamps outreach program would bring new children into the program and these are kids who are desperately needing food."

Elizabeth Byers with the *Oregon Health Action Campaign* says cuts to the Oregon Health Plan could make it even more difficult for many low income Oregonians to receive health care.

Actuality Cut #96 (TRT :19) "What we're trying to say is these are the faces of the people you are confining to no care. Look at the faces of the people that and tell them that you're not willing to make arrangements for the people in our population who are vulnerable and need our consideration and our support."

Suggested Tag: The session is scheduled to last one day, but could go longer.

Still Available:

Cuts #92 & #93 Coalition Calls for Delay in Building Prisons. Diana Adams and Huy Ong with the Oregon Students of Color Coalition comment.
Cuts #98 & #99 Alcohol and Tobacco Contributions Addictive? Janice Thompson with the Money in Politics Research Action Project comments.