



JOHN A. KITZHABER, MD
Governor

May 1, 2012

To Oregon's May Day Rally Participants and Marchers,

Good afternoon, I wish I could have joined you today on the steps of Oregon's capitol. Instead, I'm in Washington D.C., meeting with the Administration about how they can help Oregon lead the way on improving health care and reducing costs.

I want to take a moment and share with you what motivates me. My political awakening occurred in the spring of 1968 with the assassinations of Bobby Kennedy and, just a few months before, Dr. Martin Luther King. Speaking in Cleveland the day after Dr. King was shot, Kennedy put the assassination in a broader context of violence. He said, "For there is another kind of violence, slower but just as deadly, destructive as the shot or the bomb in the night. This is the violence of institutions; indifference and inaction and slow decay. This is the violence that afflicts the poor, that poisons relations between men because their skin has different colors. This is a slow destruction of a child by hunger, and schools without books and homes without heat in the winter."

We are gathered here today 44 years later to make sure that is not our future in Oregon, not here, not now, not ever. That is why I am working to ensure that all Oregonians—regardless of their race or ethnicity—have the support they need to reach their full potential. Right now, too many Oregonians are travelling from home to work, or school, or church, in risk of violating the law. They are forced to choose between this risk and providing for their families.

That is why I have convened a diverse workgroup of business, labor, public safety, faith, and community leaders. It is my hope that they will come together around changes to our driver's license laws, allowing people to come out of the shadows and contribute to our state's economic recovery. I remain committed to this issue and will continue to provide leadership on this important work.

While we wait, though, we face the need to confront some more immediate challenges. It is estimated, that thousands of Oregonians will be unable to renew their driver's licenses every year. Law enforcement faces the immediate need to be able to act quickly, accurately, and safely to secure the identity of individuals they come into contact with during routine interactions like traffic stops.

Thanks to the leadership of our Oregon State Police and their colleagues in local enforcement agencies, we are developing a better administrative and training process that will allow officers to use other forms of identification to corroborate someone's identity. Additionally, we have

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upgraded some of our technology to allow for our troopers to process High Security Mexican Consular Identification Cards at the point of contact. Through training of troopers and deploying these improved procedures, this best practice will free up limited resources and allow the OSP to focus their efforts and resources on keeping criminals and felons off the streets.

As we celebrate this May Day rally and march, let's remember our ultimate goal of an enduring prosperity for all Oregonians. Let's remember that we are here today to ensure that every single child in our state – regardless of their color, regardless of their home language, regardless of how much money their family makes – has an equal opportunity, and in fact, a certainty of achieving a productive place in our society in the 21st century.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John A. Kitzhaber". The signature is stylized and cursive.

John A. Kitzhaber, M.D.
Governor