

Michael Summers

Candidate for House District 53

www.electsummers.com

Business Competitiveness & Regulatory Predictability

Oregon businesses are navigating rising costs, regulatory complexity, and increasing competition for investment and job creation. Recent indicators point to a decline in the state's competitiveness. According to Oregon Business & Industry's Oregon Scorecard, Oregon ranks 47th for business friendliness and 43rd for cost of doing business. OBI also reports that Oregon ranked 39th in CNBC's 2025 America's Top States for Business rankings—down 11 places in a single year and from 17th overall as recently as 2017.

What policies would you pursue to improve Oregon's business climate and competitiveness? How would you approach taxes, fees, regulations, and permitting requirements that affect the cost of doing business?

As a third-generation small-business owner, I know businesses can adapt to almost anything except constant uncertainty and rising costs. Oregon needs to be a place where businesses can afford to grow, invest, and create good-paying jobs.

I would oppose new taxes and fees that make Oregon less competitive, reduce unnecessary regulations, and streamline permitting with clear requirements and predictable timelines. We should also stop picking winners and losers by giving special treatment to favored industries while local businesses and families pay more.

My approach is simple: keep costs down, remove barriers to growth, demand accountability, and make Oregon a place where businesses want to stay and invest.

Workforce Availability: Housing, Healthcare & Childcare

Central Oregon employers continue to report challenges recruiting and retaining workers due to housing affordability, healthcare costs and access, childcare availability, and other cost-of-living pressures.

What state policies would you prioritize to address these barriers and improve

employers' ability to attract and retain workers in Central Oregon? Please list specific policy examples.

Central Oregon's workforce challenges are directly tied to the cost of living. I would prioritize increasing the supply of attainable workforce housing by streamlining permitting and reducing unnecessary barriers to building. We also need to expand access to childcare by making it easier for providers to open and operate, and strengthen our healthcare workforce by expanding training opportunities and removing barriers that keep qualified professionals from practicing here.

If teachers, nurses, first responders, and small-business employees can't afford to live here, our economy can't thrive.

Infrastructure That Enables Regional Growth

Central Oregon's population and economy continue to grow, increasing demand for transportation, utilities, and other infrastructure needed to support housing and employment.

What transportation and infrastructure investments should the state prioritize for Central Oregon, and how would you approach funding those investments while considering impacts on businesses and residents?

Central Oregon needs safe roads, reliable utilities, and infrastructure that keeps pace with our growth. I would prioritize investments that improve our highways and local roads, reduce congestion, support housing and economic development, and protect our water and energy resources.

But infrastructure cannot become an excuse to continually raise taxes on working families and small businesses. Before asking Oregonians to pay more, Salem should prioritize existing transportation dollars, cut waste, leverage federal funding, and make sure projects are delivered efficiently and accountably. We can invest in Central Oregon without making it even more expensive to live and do business here.

Education & Workforce Readiness

Employers need workers with the skills and training required for both existing jobs and an

evolving economy. Central Oregon has particular workforce needs in sectors including healthcare and construction.

What changes or investments would you support to better align Oregon's education and workforce development systems with employer needs, including career and technical education, apprenticeships, workforce training, and professional licensing?

We need to do a better job connecting education to the jobs that actually exist in our communities. I support expanding career and technical education, apprenticeships, and partnerships between local schools, community colleges, and employers, particularly in high-demand fields like healthcare, construction, and the skilled trades.

We should also remove unnecessary licensing barriers that keep qualified people from entering the workforce or moving to Oregon. Not every student needs the same path. Our goal should be to give young people multiple pathways to a good-paying career while ensuring Central Oregon employers can find the skilled workers they need.

Balanced Environmental Stewardship & Economic Vitality

Central Oregon faces important decisions involving water, energy, wildfire resilience, natural resources, housing, and economic growth.

How would you approach state environmental and natural resources policies when conservation goals, infrastructure needs, and economic impacts are in tension?
What principles would guide your decisions?

Central Oregon's natural resources are part of what makes this such a special place to live, and protecting them should go hand in hand with responsible economic growth. My decisions would be guided by local input, sound science, long-term impacts, and common sense.

That means protecting our limited water supply, improving forest health and wildfire resilience, preserving productive farmland, and making sure major development has the infrastructure and resources to support it. Growth should benefit Central Oregon, not leave local families, farmers, and small businesses paying the price.