

# BEN WESTLUND

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FOR OREGON STATE TREASURER

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## WESTLUND'S "CLAIMYOURLOSTMONEY.COM" PROVES SUCCESSFUL *Hundreds of Oregonians Search for Lost Money Thanks to Website*

(June 2, 2008)---BEND, OR - Since launching [www.claimyourlostmoney.com](http://www.claimyourlostmoney.com) on May 1<sup>st</sup> Oregon Senator and candidate for State Treasurer Ben Westlund's (D-Bend) website has had 2500 hits and linked over 1300 people with Oregon's Unclaimed Property searchable database.

The Unclaimed Property Program is largely unknown to most Oregonians. The program holds assets such as un-cashed payroll checks, stock and bonds, safe-deposit box contents, insurance proceeds or refunds and bank accounts. In recent years, it has received an average of \$38 million per year and has returned approximately \$9 million per year to owners. The Department of State Lands estimates there are over one million Oregonians who have property in the program.

To demonstrate how he can improve the program as State Treasurer, Westlund's campaign declared May as *Claim Your Lost Money* Month and designed and promoted a special website portal at [www.claimyourlostmoney.com](http://www.claimyourlostmoney.com) to make it easier for Oregonians to search for their names and discover their lost property. His plan to improve the program includes moving the administration to the Treasurer's office as proposed by current Treasurer Randall Edwards. Westlund has already started drafting a bill for the 2009 legislative session and is seeking sponsors.

"The state and federal governments are holding property that belongs to about one and a half million Oregonians - and I want to help them get it back especially during these tough economic times," said Westlund. "My campaign has demonstrated that Unclaimed Property Program needs more visibility and as Oregon next State Treasurer I will continue to improve and innovate important public services like these."

### Successes of [claimyourlostmoney.com](http://claimyourlostmoney.com):

- Total visits to the site: 2500
- People who jumped from [claimyourlostmoney.com](http://claimyourlostmoney.com) to the state online search: 1,359 or 45 people per day
- Most folks found the site by linking to it from other sites such as: Facebook, [westlundfortreasurer.com](http://westlundfortreasurer.com), BlueOregon, Google Searches, and other blogs.

"People keep telling me stories about how they have discovered 20 year-old security deposit from their college days or spent an hour looking up their friends to see if they had any unclaimed property," said Senator Westlund. "As it turns out, it is fun to try to find your friends extra money."

In addition to advocating for state improvements, Westlund has pledged to advocate for the federal legislation introduced by the National Association of State Treasurers and the National

Association of Unclaimed Property Administrators to create Operation Rightful Owner, a state and federal partnership to help return the money and share earnings with the states. According to the U.S. Department of Treasury, almost \$16 billion of mature U.S. savings bonds are unclaimed.

### **Ben's Background**

As a legislator, Westlund has focused on creative financial approaches to improve Oregon. Westlund co-chaired the budget-writing Joint Ways and Means Committee. He strongly supported then-Representative Randall Edwards' creation of the Oregon College Saving Plan. He also co-chaired the committee that produced the [Healthy Oregon Act](#) to reform Oregon's health system to lower costs, improve quality and cover every Oregonian.

Westlund championed efforts to expand Oregon's use of renewable energy and worked to expand opportunities for small business. He continues to support efforts to protect Oregonians from predatory lending, identity theft and to prevent expiration dates on gift cards.

A retired successful business owner, Ben now consults with Northwest Professional Management to develop effective, affordable health care delivery systems. He and his wife Libby, who serves on the Mount Bachelor National Ski Patrol, have two children: a son B.J. (20) and a daughter Taylor (15). They live in Tumalo, just outside Bend.

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