

## KATU.com - Breaking News, Sports, Traffic and Weather - Portland, Oregon

[Print this article](#)

---

### Dems debate jobs, economy at City Club

by Melica Johnson KATU News and KATU.com Staff

*Originally printed at <http://www.katu.com/news/local/92573124.html>*

PORTLAND, Ore. - Few punches were thrown between the two Democratic heavyweights fighting for the Party's nomination for governor while they debated on Friday on how to fix the state's economic woes.

"I think our real focus in terms of state policy needs to be on small business," said former Secretary of State Bill Bradbury.

One of Bradbury's main policy proposals is to create a state bank to jump-start Oregon's economy to do what he said big banks are not.

Those banks he said "are not making loans to small businesses right now. They've gotten billions of dollars in federal TARP relief, but they are not freeing up money - crucial money - for small businesses."

Former Gov. John Kitzhaber said he sees weatherizing public schools as a way to create jobs.

"We could put people back to work next summer in every rural and urban community in Oregon that has a public school with trades jobs that will lower the cost of education, decrease our energy dependence and stimulate the economy," he said.

At the Portland City Club debate Kitzhaber did not throw any hardballs at his opponent.

"When was the moment you decided you wanted to commit your adult life to public service?" he asked Bradbury. The reason for the softball questions may be because Kitzhaber is so far ahead of Bradbury in the polls.

In an exclusive SurveyUSA/KATU News [poll](#) conducted midmonth, Kitzhaber had 54 percent of the vote, Bradbury had 16 percent and Roger Obrist had three percent. Of the 429 likely Democratic primary voters surveyed, 28 percent said they were still undecided.

Since he's so far behind in the polls, Bradbury is forced to run to the left wing of his party and fight for undecided, hardcore Democrats.

"We can pursue a public option to make sure health care is available to all of our citizens at an affordable rate," Bradbury said about a policy stance that sits well with liberal Democrats.

Bradbury did take a few swings at Kitzhaber, however, and questioned the times that he did not vote.

“I have failed to vote on several occasions,” Kitzhaber responded. “I offer no excuses. It needs to be taken seriously by everyone including myself.”

Bradbury asked Kitzhaber why he didn't vote in an election to raise cigarette taxes to pay for children's health insurance. Kitzhaber said he did vote but just forgot to sign the envelope.

Bradbury also questioned Kitzhaber's statement that the state was “ungovernable” when he left office.

“Given the fact you walked away from governing the state when it was ungovernable, why should voters give you a third chance when it's even more ungovernable today?” Bradbury said.

“I was term-limited, so I was sort of required to walk away,” Kitzhaber said to the laughter of the audience. “I did express concern that Oregon was becoming ungovernable, and I'm more concerned about that today than I was eight years ago. You only have to look south to California to see a state in utter fiscal and political disarray, teetering on the edge of bankruptcy and without the ability to act in the public interest.”

KATU Television will be hosting two debates sponsored by the League of Women Voters and AARP on Saturday and Sunday that will be broadcast statewide and streamed on KATU.com.

On Saturday, May 1, Democrats Bill Bradbury and Roger Obrist will square off for an hour starting at 7 p.m. Kitzhaber said he has a personal conflict and cannot attend.

On Sunday, May 2, the Republicans will debate for an hour and a half starting at 6:30 p.m. The Republican debate will be longer because there are more candidates.

