



OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER-ELECT

Representative Jeff Merkley

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Contact: Russ Kelley (503) 986-1210

House Leaders Announce Gift and Travel Ban

SALEM—House Speaker-elect Jeff Merkley (D-Portland) announced today that a bipartisan group of House leaders would support a set of strict gift limits that would apply to House members and staff in the 74th Legislative Assembly.

These limits would ban the following gifts to legislators from groups or individuals with issues before the legislature:

- items of value over \$10
- out-of-state travel and lodging
- entertainment and sporting events
- private restaurant meals

House Republican Whip Dennis Richardson (R-Central Point) offered his full support for the measures.

“Restoring public confidence in the legislature requires avoiding even the appearance of impropriety,” he said. **“Restricting gifts, meals and travel for legislators is a step in the right direction.”**

“Gifts to legislators serve no legitimate public purpose and badly damage the legislature’s reputation,” said Merkley. **“We are working together, Democrats and Republicans, to end these gifts starting on day one. We can’t leave this door wide open for another legislative session.”**

Rep. Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland), who will chair the Elections, Ethics and Rules committee, will propose adoption of these gift rules when the legislature convenes on Monday. **“These rules are sending a message that we are serious about strengthening legislative ethics,”** she said. **“We look forward to placing similar limits into law and to working with our Senate colleagues, who bring great experience and ideas to the deliberations.”**

The House Committee on Elections, Ethics, and Rules will also review the recommendations on ethics from the Public Commission on the Legislature and the Oregon Law Commission and will address such issues as lobbying disclosure, revolving doors, and empowering and funding the Government Standards and Practices Commission.

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