



OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

Representative Jeff Merkley

State Capitol, Room 269
Salem, Oregon

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Speaker Merkley Announces Changes to House Rules

SALEM—The Oregon House of Representatives today adopted changes to its rules for the 74th Legislative Assembly. The rules changes will foster a more open legislative process and grant more power to the minority party than in recent legislative sessions.

“These rule changes will make the House more transparent and collaborative,” Merkley said. **“We ought to encourage every member to use their voice on behalf of their constituents, regardless of their party affiliation – and these new rules will help us accomplish that.”**

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- **72 HOUR NOTICE FOR COMMITTEE HEARINGS** – We will require that all committee chairs give 72 hours notice before they hold the first hearing on any bill. This will give more Oregonians an opportunity to travel to Salem to be heard on the issues that matter to them.
- **CONTENT OF HEARING NOTICES** – When notice of a hearing is given for a bill, that notice must contain the bill number and a description of the content of the bill. This rule applies to all budget bills as well.
- **PUBLIC RECORDS RETENTION** – Records that contain information relating to the conduct of the public’s business must be retained by legislators for a period of one year.
- **PRIORITY CONSIDERATION FOR BIPARTISAN BILLS** – Each member may designate up to two bills for priority consideration by the House. These bills, which must have at least two chief sponsors from each party, will be guaranteed a committee hearing and a work session.
- **PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION ON COMMITTEES** – We will restore the proportionality of the Ways and Means committee and the Emergency Board to reflect the representation of the two parties in the House.
- **INDEPENDENT PARLIAMENTARIAN** – The Parliamentarian plays an essential role in interpreting and enforcing the rules of the House. We will restore the independence of the Parliamentarian by vesting the authority to hire or terminate the Parliamentarian with the entire body, not just the Speaker.

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- **ROBUST RULE OF 31** – In a democratic body, a majority of members ought to be able to set the agenda. We will restore the provision that allows a majority of 31 members to bring a bill to the floor for consideration, and we will restore the supermajority requirement for changing that rule.
- **SPONSORSHIP OF BILLS** – Any member may sign on as a sponsor of a bill and will no longer be required to secure the permission of the Chief Sponsor before doing so.
- **BILL REFERRALS** – Bills must be referred to the committee of jurisdiction within seven calendar days. This shortens the referral period which previously stood at seven *session* days.
- **CONFERENCE COMMITTEE SCOPE OF AUTHORITY** – The scope of authority for conference committees will be limited to the difference between the two versions of a bill. This brings the House in line with the customs of the Senate, and will prevent last minute bill substitutions that have not been heard by and vetted through the committee process.
- **ELIMINATING FINES TO COMPEL ATTENDANCE** – The \$1000 per day penalty for failure to attend the legislative session will be eliminated. As has historically been the case, the Sergeant-at-Arms and the Oregon State Police will once again enforce attendance policies.

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