



# PRESS RELEASE

## OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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## **Oregon House Democrats Release Transformational Agenda for 2021 Session**

*Agenda details values and priorities for post-pandemic transformation*

As the 81st Legislative Session begins, Oregon finds itself in the midst of several global crises. Today, Democrats in Oregon's House of Representatives released their agenda for the 2021 Legislative Session, highlighting caucus priorities for rebuilding an Oregon where everyone can thrive.

The agenda, titled "Transformation Through Crisis," details the values that will shape Oregon House Democrats' recovery efforts after a year of calamities, including the COVID-19 pandemic, a recession that has worsened income inequality, intensifying wildfires, and ongoing institutional and structural racism.

"We know that this pandemic isn't affecting everyone equally," says Rep. Barbara Smith Warner (D-Portland), the House Majority Leader. "Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities have faced disproportionate harm to their health and their livelihoods. Many rural communities, already hanging on by a thread, have been devastated by COVID-19 and the wildfires. Small businesses are struggling, and many have closed their doors permanently. We must be bold in prioritizing the needs of these communities."

The agenda covers a variety of issue areas, including equitable economic recovery, education, access to healthcare, housing, climate change, and addressing the racial disparities threaded through all policy areas, including policing and criminal justice.

"We are presenting a vision for Oregon where every community has the resources, tools, and opportunities to truly prosper," says Rep. Khanh Pham (D-Portland). "We will achieve that by centering the needs of those who've been historically excluded by the political process. This work is long overdue."

Like most aspects of life since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 legislative session will look different than previous sessions. Committees will be meeting remotely to prevent the spread of the virus, and Oregonians will have greater opportunities to testify on legislation through the use of phone and video technology, eliminating the need to take a day off work, find childcare, and drive to Salem to testify on a bill.

"The multiple, cascading challenges in front of us demand that we respond boldly," says Rep. Pam Marsh (D-Southern Jackson County), the House Democrats' Assistant Majority Leader for

Policy. “While we have a diversity of opinions among us, House Democrats are united in our commitment to improving the lives of all Oregonians, especially those who’ve been impacted most by this pandemic. This is an opportunity to be transformative in our approach and make changes that will have positive impacts for generations to come.”

The Oregon House Democrats’ agenda for 2021 can be found here:

<https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/housedemocrats/Documents/House%20Democrats%202021%20Agenda.pdf>

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