



PRESS RELEASE

OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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Oregon House Democrats Elect New Caucus Leader, Speaker Nominee

SALEM, Ore. – Today, the Oregon House Democratic caucus nominated [Rep. Dan Rayfield](#) (D-Corvallis) to serve as the Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives and elected [Rep. Julie Fahey](#) (D-West Eugene, Junction City) as Majority Leader. The election comes following the decision by [Rep. Tina Kotek](#) (D-Portland) to step down as Speaker and [Rep. Barbara Smith Warner](#) (D-Portland) to step down as Majority Leader.

Speaker Kotek, the longest-serving Speaker in Oregon history, will step away from the legislature on January 21. Rep. Smith Warner, who became Majority Leader in 2019, will continue to serve as Representative for House District 45.

"I'm deeply honored that my caucus has entrusted me with this nomination," Rep. Rayfield said. "I recognize this comes with tremendous responsibility at a pivotal moment for families across our state.

"I ran to be Speaker to help guide the House as we collectively work to build a recovery that reaches all Oregonians. Our economy has picked up steam in recent months and I have tremendous optimism about our state's future. But after years of living in a global pandemic, I know many are still hurting. The Omicron variant is contributing to workforce shortages and challenges for our students, educators and families. But I know there is a brighter future ahead and I am committed to working with both parties and both chambers to lead the entire state forward."

Rayfield, 42, was first elected to the Legislature in 2014. He represents House District 16, comprising Corvallis and Philomath.

"Our state is facing enormous challenges that legislators are ready to tackle in the upcoming session," Speaker Kotek said. "The Oregon House of Representatives will be well-served through this transition as the legislature continues to do the people's work."

Rayfield has served as co-chair of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means, the state's lead budget writing committee, since 2019. His careful budget management has helped

stabilize the state's once unreliable revenue system. Oregon has built record reserves to protect essential social services during his tenure as budget chair and is among the states best-prepared for a future economic downturn. He has also prioritized campaign finance reform since joining the Legislature.

Born in Oregon, Rayfield graduated from Tigard High School, Western Oregon University and the Willamette University College of Law. His work as an attorney primarily involves fighting for individuals with consumer and civil rights cases against large corporations, insurance companies, and others.

Upon Speaker Kotek's resignation, which is effective January 22, Speaker Pro Tempore Paul Holvey (D - Eugene) will serve as the Speaker until the House votes to make a formal appointment on February 1 when the Legislature convenes to start the 2022 legislative session.

[Rep. Wlnsvey Campos](#) (D - Aloha) intends to make the formal nomination on the House floor.

"I've had great experiences working with Rep. Rayfield and his office to expand voting rights and improve healthcare access to all Oregonians," Rep. Campos said. "I'm excited that we will continue to have a Speaker who is a champion for progressive policies that are going to benefit working families, historically marginalized communities and all who desperately need support as we navigate the pandemic."

Rep. Fahey assumes the role of Majority Leader from Rep. Smith Warner immediately following the election.

Among Rep. Smith Warner's legislative accomplishments, she led the passage of the Student Success Act to establish ongoing dedicated funding (currently at \$1 billion per year) for pre-K to 12 education for the first time in a generation, and oversaw the passage of safe storage requirements for firearms. She continues to be a strong advocate for worker rights and living wage jobs.

"It has been an honor and a privilege to lead the Oregon House Democrats through the challenges of the last few years. I am proud that we led with science and good faith in our pandemic response, centered the needs of those most impacted, both economically and health-wise, and acknowledged and addressed the continued racial justice imbalances in our state," said Rep. Smith Warner.

"I thank Rep. Smith Warner for her courageous leadership, and I'm honored to have my colleagues' trust to lead this incredible caucus," said Leader Fahey. "As the pandemic continues to impact schools, small businesses, healthcare workers, and working families, I stand committed to the bold, structural changes we need to meet this moment, build resiliency, and ensure an equitable recovery."

Fahey joined the Legislature in 2017 and has been a champion for tackling Oregon's housing crisis, serving as Chair of the House Committee on Housing. During the 2021 legislative session, she was instrumental in securing \$765 million dollars in investments for affordable housing and permanent supportive housing, down payment assistance, homeless services, tenant support, and more. During the successful 2021 December

special session, Fahey led efforts to extend the safe harbor policy, in addition to investing \$215 million for housing protections, keeping thousands of people housed.

Additionally, [Rep. Rob Nosse](#) was elected Majority Whip, [Rep. Andrea Valderrama](#) was elected Deputy Majority Whip, and [Rep. Karin Power](#) as Assistant Majority Leader.

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