



**From the OFFICES OF THE HOUSE SPEAKER
AND HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 1, 2024

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House Democratic Leaders Reaffirm Commitment to a Welcoming and Inclusive Capitol

SALEM — Today, House Speaker **Dan Rayfield** (D-Corvallis) and House Majority Leader **Julie Fahey** (D-West Eugene & Veneta) released a statement responding to recent rhetoric and reaffirming a commitment to making Oregon’s Capitol a safe, welcoming, and inclusive space for all Oregonians:

“As the legislature prepares to return to Salem for a five-week session to address the most pressing issues facing Oregonians, and in light of recent comments made by fellow legislators, it’s critical that we as Democratic leaders re-affirm our staunch commitment to ensuring the Oregon Capitol is a safe, welcoming, and inclusive space for all Oregonians. The Capitol is and will continue to be open to everyone looking to peacefully participate in the democratic process.

All around us, we’re seeing political rhetoric become more extreme and divisive. This alarming trend threatens our ability to function as an inclusive democracy. What’s more, we know that extremist rhetoric online can lead to violent actions offline, which puts vulnerable communities and individuals at risk. Disturbing rhetoric attacking people because of their sexual orientation, religion, race, and ethnicity has unfortunately started filtering into mainstream political discussions. As legislative leaders, let us be crystal clear that hate speech and dehumanizing language have no place in the Oregon Capitol.

In recent years, we have taken steps to ensure that the Capitol building is physically safer and more secure for the public, staff, and legislators. We have also instituted formal, trauma-informed systems to investigate and address instances of discrimination, bias, misconduct, and abuse when they occur. These measures are intended to make the Capitol

safer and more welcoming to everyone—particularly those who’ve been shut out of the democratic process for far too long.

As legislative leaders, we have the responsibility and the honor of ensuring that this building is open to all, regardless of race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender, disability, or age. We know that Oregonians share these values, and that the functioning of a healthy democracy depends on them.

Our constituents are counting on us to get critical work done for our state over the next five weeks. As we tackle the difficult challenges, we hope to see vibrant and diverse participation from communities and Oregonians from across the state. This is your Capitol, and we look forward to seeing you.”

The 2024 legislative session begins on February 5, 2024.

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