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## **Impeachment Bill Clears House in Wide Bipartisan Vote**

*HJR 31 will send a Constitutional amendment to voters for approval*

With a wide, bipartisan vote, the Oregon House today voted to approve House Joint Resolution 31, which would send a Constitutional amendment to Oregon voters granting the legislature impeachment powers over statewide elected executive branch officials.

Currently, Oregon is the only state in the nation in which the legislature has no impeachment authority. House members looked at policies in place in other states, as well as research from the National Conference of State Legislatures, to craft an impeachment policy that is right for Oregon.

HJR 31 vests the power of impeachment with the Oregon Legislature for “malfeasance in office, corruption, neglect of duty or other high crime or misdemeanor.” The impeachment would be started in the House of Representatives, and then tried in the State Senate.

The bill, which passed 47-12, was co-carried by Rep. Jodi Hack (R-Salem) and Rep. Val Hoyle (D-West Eugene & Junction City).

“HJR 31 is about accountability,” said Rep. Hoyle. “It strengthens Oregon’s system of checks and balances by providing an option, in very serious circumstances, for elected executive branch officials to be removed from office. It includes protections against abuse to ensure that the proceedings are carried out with integrity.”

“It will give Oregonians confidence that their legislature is equipped to handle all situations that may come before them,” Rep. Hoyle added.

If approved by the Senate, HJR 31 will be presented as a ballot measure to voters in November 2016.

“We must be thoughtful but diligent in creating checks and balances that create accountability,” said Rep. Hack. “HJR 31 is thoughtful because it serves to join our fellow 49 states. HJR 31 is diligent because it shows that we as elected leaders are listening to the concerns of our constituents.”

“This resolution is not a weapon, but a tool for accountability of the executive branch,” continued Rep. Hack. “It is constructed in a manner that provides for a difficult yet fair process of impeachment, and while we all hope that it is never needed, we need to have this tool available so that the integrity and duties of the executive branch are maintained.”

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