



PRESS RELEASE

OREGON LEGISLATIVE PEOPLE OF COLOR (POC) CAUCUS

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Broad, Bipartisan Coalition Joins Call for Police Accountability Special Session

SALEM, Ore. – Today, the Legislative People of Color Caucus and a bipartisan group of legislators called on Gov. Kate Brown to convene a special session within 30 days to address police accountability legislation.

"Over the past two weeks, we have watched our nation and state slowly step up to engage in a conversation that is long overdue," said Rep. Janelle Bynum (D-Happy Valley). "We are asking ourselves: How do we hold the people charged with protecting our communities to account? How do we end state-sanctioned violence against Black and brown people? How do we begin to understand another person's pain when it seems so far from us?"

The legislation being called for is a new law that would prohibit an arbitrator from lessening disciplinary action against a law enforcement officer if the arbitrator and the law enforcement agency determine that the officer has committed misconduct. The concept, introduced by Sen. Lew Frederick (D-Portland), has been approved twice unanimously by the Senate and awaited a vote in the House in 2020.

In a joint statement, Rep. Rick Lewis (R-Silverton), Rep. Rob Noble (R-McMinnville) and Sen. Lynn Findley (R-Vale) voiced their support for the legislation and a special session.

"As co-chief sponsors of the bill, we are proud to stand with our fellow legislators in calling for accountability and professionalism required of our law enforcement officers. Now, more than ever before, we stand with Oregonians who want us to lead the nation in public safety policies and ensure justice is served by only those who are fit to wear the badge."

[House Speaker Tina Kotek \(D-Portland\)](#), [House Majority Leader Barbara Smith Warner \(D-Portland\)](#), [Senate President Peter Courtney \(D-Salem\)](#) and [Senate Majority Leader Rob Wagner \(D-Lake Oswego\)](#) have previously voiced support for the POC Caucus proposals.

In addition to the Legislators, organizations representing law enforcement and prosecutors have voiced support.

“Oregon’s Chiefs and Sheriffs strongly support this important legislative proposal and look forward to working with the legislative sponsors to secure passage of the bill. We are committed to ensuring that Oregon Law Enforcement is providing the highest level of accountability, professionalism and integrity and believe this legislation is a necessary next step,” said Kevin Campbell, Executive Director, Oregon Association Chiefs of Police and Jason Myers, Executive Director, Oregon State Sheriffs’ Association.

Marion County District Attorney Paige Clarkson, president of the Oregon District Attorneys Association also joined the call.

“As partners in the law enforcement community we have a great responsibility to serve and protect our entire community. This requires strong leadership in all ranks of public safety with meaningful accountability. The Oregon District Attorneys Association joins in the call today to set high standards for officers with clear principles of acceptable conduct and the ability for local agencies to promptly enforce these standards when they are not met. The Oregon District Attorneys Association joins in support for immediate action during a Special Session for the law officer disciplinary reform offered in SB 1567 (2020).”

Rep. Bynum said the time for action is now.

“POC legislators have always been ready to have the conversation and have consistently pushed on our leadership for change,” Rep. Bynum said. “Now is the time for everyone to come to the table to make swift and meaningful public safety reforms.”

The members of the Oregon Legislative People of Color Caucus include Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon (D-Woodburn), Rep. Janelle Bynum (D-Happy Valley), Rep. Diego Hernandez (D-Portland), Rep. Akasha Lawrence Spence (D-Portland), Rep. Mark Meek (D-Oregon City), Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-Lake Oswego), Rep. Tawna Sanchez (D-Portland), Sen. Lew Frederick (D-Portland) and Sen. James Manning (D-Eugene).

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