



# PRESS RELEASE

## OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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### **House Votes to Expand Public Participation and Transparency in Lawmaking Process**

*House Bills 2993 and 2992 bring communities most impacted by legislation to the decision making table*

SALEM, OR—This week the House voted to expand public participation and transparency in the lawmaking process by passing [House Bill 2993](#) and [House Bill 2992](#). HB 2993 will bring communities most impacted by legislation to the table during the rulemaking process. HB 2992 will ensure working families and low-income communities can also get involved by breaking down cost barriers.

“If we want our democracy and the laws we pass to answer to the needs Oregonians have, then we need a structure for people to actually participate. That starts with House Bills 2993 and 2992,” said chief sponsor and [House Majority Leader Barbara Smith Warner](#) (D-Portland).

During the bill making process, state boards, commissions, and agencies adopt rules or orders that ensure the proposed law aligns with its legislative intent, or purpose. Through HB 2993, when an agency establishes an advisory committee for a bill, it would be required to include persons and communities most impacted to serve on the committee. Agencies would also have to include a statement on how the rules added to a bill affect racial equity in Oregon.

“Policy is about making people’s lives better, easier. Unfortunately, we see how the special interests of a few can take away from that. It’s why we continue to see disparities in issues like public health, where our BIPOC communities are underserved and do not have equitable access to the same resources and care,” said [Rep. Andrea Salinas](#) (D-Lake Oswego). “With this legislation we’re breaking this cycle and setting up a transparent system where legislation is shaped by and more reflective of our vibrant, diverse democracy.”

[Per state law](#), members on boards or commissions are allowed to receive compensation if they are not public employees. Under HB 2992, members that are not full-time state employees and

who make less than \$50,000 a year will receive both compensation and reimbursement for travel and other expenses related to performing official duties.

"When we think about public participation in the legislative process, we need to consider the barriers in place that keep people from participating in the first place. Many single parent and low-income families are forced out of the process because they can't sacrifice a paycheck, need to find childcare, or can't afford transportation," said [Rep. Khanh Pham](#) (D-Portland). "By providing financial assistance, we're giving people a chance to participate and shape decisions that directly impact them. That's democracy in action."

The bills, which came at the request of [Reimagine Oregon](#), form part of House Democrats' priority to modernize the People's Legislature this Session.

"It's exciting to know that the State Legislature has prioritized adjusting existing infrastructure to be more inclusive of Black and Brown communities who are often most-impacted by law changes and service delivery from the state. Removing systemic barriers to support increased participation is a great step in the right direction for our State and we look forward to continued forward movement," said Katrina Holland, executive director of Reimagine Oregon.

HB 2993 passed 42-15 and HB 2992 passed 36-20. Both bills now head to the Senate for consideration.

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