



# PRESS RELEASE

## OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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### **Legislators advocate for additional COVID relief policies**

*Special Session is First Step, Unfinished Business Remains*

SALEM, Ore. – On Monday, legislators will return to Salem for the third special session of 2020 and will advance urgent measures to provide COVID-19 and wildfire relief to Oregonians. However, the House Democratic caucus has been and will continue to advocate for a number of additional, important policies.

“The list of policies the legislature will take up next week are all critically important for Oregonians and must get done,” said House Majority Leader Barbara Smith Warner (D-Portland). “And there is so much more to do. The legislature must take these up in the coming months to support frontline workers, struggling families and ensure our state is better prepared to respond to emergencies.”

Rep. Paul Evans (D-Monmouth) and Rep. Nancy Nathanson (D-Eugene) drafted Legislative Concept 3 to establishing a permanent stockpile of personal protective equipment (PPE) and COVID-19 testing (including materials) for catastrophic disasters.

“LC 3 will yield near-term and far-term benefits: improved availability of mission critical equipment as well as increased security of source materials and a supply chain for production,” Rep. Evans said.

“We have spent months learning the lessons of our early COVID-19 response,” Rep. Nathanson said. “This legislation can make immediate progress for our state in how we can resolve an overdependence on foreign supply chains.”

Additionally, measures to ensure police accountability, protect Oregonians from foreclosures, and close tax loopholes for the wealthiest one percent and large corporations still require action.

Rep. Janelle Bynum (D-Happy Valley), the co-chair of the Joint Committee on Transparent Policing and Use of Force Reform, said the committee has had a number of proposals ready to bring forward to the legislature for months, including updates to the use of munitions against protesters, standards for peace officer uniforms and reforms for arbitration, among others.

“While I am pleased with the work that we have been able to accomplish this year in ensuring our communities are safer and law enforcement is accountable, there is so much more work to be done,” Rep. Bynum said. “This work has to get done as soon as possible.”

Rep. Alissa Keny-Guyer (D-Portland) has worked with tax fairness advocates and colleagues to close the three tax loopholes created by the CARES Act that overwhelmingly benefit the wealthiest Oregonians and largest corporations. Oregon automatically connects to the federal tax code; if the Legislature doesn't "disconnect," the cost to state revenue is estimated to be well over \$100 million next year, when Oregon desperately needs the revenue to climb out of the recession.

"When small businesses and families are struggling and the state is making difficult decisions about its investments, it is wrong to allow tax breaks for the wealthiest individuals and corporations to stay on the books," Rep. Keny-Guyer said. "I will continue advocating to end these tax breaks in the 2021 session, and redirect the revenue to the small businesses and families who most need it."

Rep. Paul Holvey (D-Eugene) has been working for months to develop legislation to help homeowners avoid foreclosure during the pandemic. The legislation would extend an existing moratorium for residential mortgages.

"I am deeply concerned about the thousands of Oregonians facing the potential foreclosure process beginning at the end of the month with this not being included in the package of bills taken up during a special session," Holvey said. "The risk of pushing people into homelessness in the middle of a global pandemic is immensely distressing. I will continue working hard to get my colleagues to address this legislation."

The legislature will convene in special session on Monday, Dec. 21. The 81<sup>st</sup> Legislative Assembly will convene on Tuesday, Jan 19, 2021.

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