



PRESS RELEASE

OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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Second Special Session of 2020 Concludes

House Democrats celebrate progress, condemn failure for working families

SALEM, Ore. – The Oregon Legislature wrapped up the Second Special Session of 2020 shortly after 11:15 p.m. on Monday, rebalancing budgets in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, helping workers struggling to get their unemployment benefits and strengthening police accountability measures.

House Majority Leader Barbara Smith Warner (D-Portland) issued the following statement:

“Budgets are values documents, and I’m proud to lead a caucus who embarked on the incredibly challenging work demanded of us by the COVID-19 pandemic guided by equity, compassion and fairness. We were able to protect the critical services that families need most: education, health care, and the safety of our communities.

“This session was also an opportunity to address historic wrongs and help those Oregonians who have been desperately waiting on the backlogged unemployment system. Additional measures to address police use of force and end the practice of chokeholds is a critical next step and continues driving the work of dismantling racist structures. I am also pleased, after repeated calls, that we were able to move forward two measures that will help streamline and support working Oregonians struggling with their unemployment insurance during this pandemic.

“Disappointment does not begin to describe my feelings however about the failure of Senate Bill 1702 – a measure designed to help Oregonians who work in public and private educational institutions overcome a unique roadblock in the unemployment process. This measure would have not only helped those workers but many others whose claims are awaiting adjudication. It’s a shame that Senate Republicans prioritize politics over people.

“While we are doing all that we can to ensure an equitable recovery, the scale of this crisis highlights the critical need for further federal action to support state investments in essential services that provide safety and security for all Oregonians, including the state’s most vulnerable populations. I continue to call for meaningful federal action.”

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