



HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

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House Democrats Announce Priorities for 2024

The February session will focus on addressing Oregon’s top needs: homelessness and housing affordability, the addiction crisis, and keeping our neighborhoods safe

SALEM — Today, Democrats in the Oregon House of Representatives announced their **[top priorities for the upcoming legislative session](#)**. Building on a successful session in 2023, House Democrats will use the February session to work on the most pressing issues facing Oregonians: **homelessness and housing affordability; improved behavioral health and addiction services; and safe neighborhoods and communities.**

“Every community in Oregon is facing the devastating impacts of both expensive housing and cheap fentanyl,” said **House Majority Leader Julie Fahey** (D-West Eugene & Veneta). “What’s playing out on our streets is unacceptable. This session, Democrats have a plan to make our neighborhoods safer, cleaner, and healthier – we will take action to put even more people on a path out of homelessness and to reduce the impact harmful drugs are having in our communities.”

House Democrats will focus on addressing homelessness, increasing housing supply, and holding agencies accountable. Because of the investments the legislature made early in the 2023 session, Oregon met its homelessness goals last year – creating 817 new shelter beds, re-housing more than 1,000 households, and preventing more than 7,600 households from becoming homeless.

“This is a session of opportunities,” said **House Speaker Dan Rayfield** (D-Corvallis). “Republicans and Democrats are united in our commitment to increase housing supply and homelessness supports, helping families and individuals struggling with addiction, and investing in Oregon’s future.”

“Any investments we make this year must directly address the current problems Oregonians face and position us well for responding to future challenges,” said **Rep. Tawna Sanchez** (D-Portland) and co-chair of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means.

In 2020, Oregon voters passed Measure 110, decriminalizing the possession of small amounts of drugs. Since then, the legislature has been tracking implementation of the measure. Democrats have a plan to respond to the crisis unfolding in our streets with additional policies addressing addiction, behavioral health, and public safety concerns.

This month, Co-chairs of the committee announced one bill being considered inside a broader package of legislation Democrats are introducing. This sweeping package invests in prevention and the root causes of addiction, cracks down on drug dealers, restricts public drug use, moves people into addiction treatment, and reduces the number of overdose deaths.

"We need to take immediate action to address the drug crisis and strategically build off of the investments we have made over the last few years in behavioral health services and housing," said **Rep. Jason Kropf** (D-Bend), co-chair of the Joint Interim Committee on Addiction and Community Safety Response. "Our package expands and strengthens our treatment infrastructure, breaking down silos between our public health and public safety systems in order to create as many effective pathways to treatment and recovery as possible."

In addition to addressing the immediate challenges facing our communities, House Democrats continue to work on the issues that make Oregon a great place to live and do business.

Ongoing work includes building a robust emergency management system, protecting workers in critical fields, supporting aging adults, providing critical services for veterans and those who served our country in combat, making healthcare more affordable with an emphasis on policy addressing social determinants of health, adapting to and mitigating climate change, and ensuring safe and secure elections.

“We’re back and ready to get to work for every Oregonian working, living, learning, and raising a family in our great state,” said **Rep. Andrea Valderrama** (D-Outer East Portland). “By working together, we can strengthen our schools, support working families, increase access to childcare and preschool for young Oregonians, and give every family the opportunity to thrive.”

The legislative session begins on February 5, when legislators will convene for 35 days to pass thoughtful, common sense legislation, balance our budget, and provide oversight and accountability for state agencies and service providers.

View the full House Democratic Caucus Agenda here: oregonlegislature.gov/housedemocrats

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