



OREGON HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE

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House Democrats Reject Compromise, Adopt House Rules Despite Bipartisan Opposition

Salem, Ore. - Having rejected repeated requests from Republicans to make modest modifications to the Rules of the House, Speaker Kotek and House Democrats adopted their version of the rules on a 34-26 vote this morning. Republicans had sought commonsense amendments to the regulations that govern the chamber, but were rebuffed in pre-session negotiations and during today's organizational session.

"I know that the majority party has a very heavy lift coming up. You may even ask for our help at times," said Assistant Republican Leader Carl Wilson (R-Grants Pass), who led Republican opposition to the Democrats' rules package. "Why not invest in the relationship and give us some latitude on some commonsense changes in the House rules? These changes will enhance the process, the institution, and certainly individual relationships. But, our suggested changes have been rebuffed outright. Just remember as we vote on House rules today, we're simply asking for a sign of goodwill, a sign of respect, that will lead to a better process for the taxpayers who pay dearly to have us here."

Formal opposition to House Rules is a relatively rare occurrence in the Oregon Legislature, though Republicans have long sought amendments through informal means. Among Republicans' chief concerns were the Speaker's unilateral control over the committee appointments of minority members, the Speaker's disregard for requests by the minority party to select their own committee vice-chairs, as well as the elimination of the Rural Communities, Land Use and Water Committee.

Despite bipartisan opposition and pleas for compromise from Republicans, the majority party's version of the Rules of the House was adopted.

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Note: Democrat Brad Witt joined Republicans in voting against the Rules of the House as proposed.