



OREGON HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE

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Short Session Delivers Partisan Results For Oregonians

Democrats Rush Through Costly Mandates, Betray Voter Intent On Annual Sessions

Salem, OR - Marking the end of a historically partisan session characterized by backroom deals, costly mandates, and a blatant lack of transparency, House Republicans today voted to adjourn the 2016 February session. The session, which saw complex policy bills advance with unprecedented speed, stood in stark contrast to the original, voter-approved intent of annual legislative meetings.

“Short sessions were sold to Oregonians as a way for the Legislature to make budget adjustments and policy fixes to laws passed in previous years,” said House Republican Leader Mike McLane (R-Powell Butte). “But instead of honoring the will of the people, Democrats used the 2016 session to ram through controversial and costly policy proposals that will increase the cost of living in Oregon, hurt our small businesses, and make it more difficult for working families in Oregon to succeed. I’m disappointed with what the short session has become, and how we got here.”

In less than 30 days, House Democrats rushed through a massive new wage mandate, voted to triple the amount of money trial lawyers can make on civil liability lawsuits, passed a bill placing new restrictions on gun rights, and threatened to adopt a cap-and-tax environmental program that would have crippled Oregon’s economy. With nearly every controversial bill, Democrats refused to consider commonsense, Republican-sponsored amendments and rejected multiple minority reports, choosing instead to double down on partisan politics and flawed legislation. Much like the 2015 session, House Democrats also refused to consider several government transparency and accountability proposals introduced by Republicans, voting against efforts to allow consideration of the bills.

“We had a number of opportunities this session to find common ground and move forward on bipartisan policy solutions,” said Deputy House Republican Leader Carl Wilson (R-Grants Pass). “I’m very disappointed in the partisan nature of this session and the fact that so many amendments, minority reports, and Republican-sponsored bills were simply ignored by the majority party. Oregonians expect us to work together across the aisle, not simply dig partisan lines in the sand and disenfranchise minority voices.”

Even as Democrats took up dozens of complicated policy bills, some of Oregon’s most pressing issues went completely unaddressed. The majority party refused to hold serious conversations regarding massive budget shortfalls related to the Public Employees Retirement System, ignored efforts develop a plan to provide much-needed transportation and infrastructure upgrades, and failed to make game changing reforms in Oregon’s public education system.

With the adjournment of the 2016 session, the Legislature is not scheduled to convene for a full legislative session again until 2017. Lawmakers will continue to hold quarterly committee meetings throughout the interim to receive updates from state agencies and task forces.

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