



# OFFICE OF THE HOUSE SPEAKER

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## NEWS RELEASE

August 10, 2020

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### **Statement by House Speaker Tina Kotek on the conclusion of the second 2020 special session**

SALEM, Ore. – Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek (D-Portland) issued the following statement today after the conclusion of the second 2020 special session, which rebalanced the state budget amid the COVID-19 pandemic and passed bills to improve police accountability and assist Oregonians waiting for unemployment benefits.

“During incredibly difficult and uncertain circumstances, the Legislature came together and took a thoughtful approach to rebalance the state budget. We preserved funding for critical public services, including education, health care, child welfare, housing and economic development. We invested more than \$50 million to build desperately needed affordable housing, and more than \$30 million for critical water infrastructure projects in Warm Springs, Salem, and Sweet Home.

“We also built on recent and long overdue progress to improve police accountability in the state. It was particularly significant that we updated Oregon’s obsolete deadly use of force statute to be current with Supreme Court caselaw. It requires officers to use de-escalation as a first resort when reasonably able. In circumstances where non-deadly force must be used, this measure requires that it only be to the degree necessary to prevent imminent injury to a person or accomplish arrest. We must keep pushing for more progress, and I look forward to continuing the work put forward by the Joint Committee on Transparent Policing and Use of Force Reform.

“Additionally, I appreciate the progress that has been made to streamline claims for self-employed workers and temporarily raise the income threshold for underemployed Oregonians to receive benefits. However, I am appalled that Senate Bill 1702, which would have sped up the process and helped thousands of Oregonians get their benefits faster, failed. This was a missed opportunity that we should come back on.

“This session is far from the end of long-term conversations to put Oregon on the path to an equitable economic recovery. The scale of this crisis dictates additional support from the federal government, and I urge Congress to provide that support as soon as possible to prevent the suffering that is happening daily across our state.”

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