



OFFICE OF THE HOUSE SPEAKER

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NEWS RELEASE

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Special Committee to consider expulsion of Rep. Nearman over role in Capitol breach

Speaker Kotek appoints House Special Committee on December 21, 2020

SALEM – In light of a newly surfaced video revealing that Representative Mike Nearman coordinated a breach of the Oregon State Capitol last year despite COVID-19 restrictions, House Speaker Tina Kotek today appointed a new special committee to consider expelling him from the House of Representatives.

The Special Committee on December 21, 2020 will convene later this week and take up House Resolution 3, which would expel Representative Nearman if approved by two-thirds of the members of the House of Representatives. The resolution notes that staff present in the Capitol that day described the events as “intense and stressful,” “terrifying,” and “distressing.”

On December 21, 2020, when legislators were meeting in a special session to consider legislation to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, Representative Nearman opened a door to allow a group of rioters without masks into the Oregon State Capitol. The rioters, some of whom were armed, violently clashed with police and damaged property. Representative Nearman returned through a separate door six minutes later.

The new video, first reported last Friday by *Oregon Public Broadcasting*, reveals Representative Nearman coordinated the breach by giving out his phone number at an event and instructing attendees on how they could break into the Capitol with assistance from someone already inside.

“The severity of Representative Nearman’s actions and last week’s revelation that they were premeditated require a special committee to immediately consider expelling him from the House of Representatives,” Speaker Kotek said. “He knowingly put the physical safety of everyone in

the Capitol – lawmakers, staff and law enforcement – in jeopardy. As we saw in January at the U.S. Capitol, the ramifications could have been dire if law enforcement had not stepped in so quickly. This is an unprecedented situation facing the Legislature. It is beyond a workplace conduct issue and must be treated as such.”

The Special Committee on December 21, 2020 will be evenly split between Democrats and Republicans.

- Speaker Pro Tempore Paul Holvey (D-Eugene) - Chair
- House Republican Leader Christine Drazan (R-Canby)
- House Democratic Leader Barbara Smith Warner (D-Portland)
- Representative Daniel Bonham (R-The Dalles)
- Representative Andrea Salinas (D-Lake Oswego)
- Representative Duane Stark (R-Grants Pass)

Representative Nearman has been criminally charged with two misdemeanors for his actions on December 21, specifically first-degree official misconduct and second-degree criminal trespass.

In January, after news outlets published Capitol security camera footage showing Representative Nearman’s actions, Speaker Kotek called for his resignation, stripped him of all committee assignments, and rescinded his commission appointments. She also invoiced Representative Nearman for the costs to fix the damage that resulted when he allowed the rioters to enter the Capitol vestibule. Additionally, immediate safety measures were established to rescind his badge access to the Capitol and require 24 hours’ notice before each time he enters the building.

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