



## **SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE**

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Democrats on Senate Judiciary Applaud U.S. Supreme Court Decision Ending Non-Unanimous Juries**

SALEM – Today, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the U.S. Constitution requires unanimous jury verdicts in state criminal courts. This decision ends Oregon's practice of using non-unanimous juries to find defendants guilty of crimes other than murder.

“Oregon’s non-unanimous jury law is outdated and unjust,” said Senator Floyd Prozanski (D-Eugene) who chairs the Senate Committee on Judiciary. “A representative jury is key to holding the state accountable and it is necessary that every individual on a jury is in agreement when deciding whether to convict a defendant.”

“This history of this law is rooted in discrimination, originating from well-documented racist and anti-immigrant sentiments,” added Senator Michael Dembrow (D-Portland). “I am grateful for this decision, it effectively does away with an antiquated and harmful law.”

Senator James I. Manning Jr. (D-Eugene) noted that, “This practice of non-unanimous juries has made our criminal justice system less fair and has led to an ongoing exclusion of minority voices and diverse viewpoints in Oregon’s criminal courts. That does not allow for justice to take place. By disallowing non-unanimous juries, each juror has an equal voice.”

“Unanimity encourages fairness in our justice system as it requires jurors to have a thoughtful and thorough deliberation in order to reach a shared conclusion,” said Senator Sara Gelser (D-Corvallis). “As a result of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling today, Oregon’s criminal courts will be more just, and Oregonians everywhere will be better-served.”

Senator Floyd Prozanski chairs the Senate Committee on Judiciary. Senator Dembrow, Senator Manning and Senator Gelser are the Democratic members of the Committee.

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