



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 16, 2025

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Senate Democrats Ring the Alarm on Constitutional Crisis; Call to Defend Democracy Against Rising Authoritarianism

SALEM, OR – Oregon Senators throughout the state have taken to the floor of the Senate chamber this week, denouncing the Trump administration's attacks on the U.S. Constitution and calling for Americans to defend civil liberties and due process.

On Tuesday, April 15th, **Senator Deb Patterson (D - Salem)** stood to report, "In the name of protecting America's interests, this Administration is trampling on the ideals we all hold dear—ideals of due process, human rights, and the rule of law for migrants, visitors, permanent residents, and citizens. And in doing so is doing irreparable harm to our nation's values, our country's global standing, and to growing numbers of human lives."

Senator Lew Frederick (D - Portland) was direct in his condemnation, "Evil...I see a basic overarching evil in the actions coming out of Florida and Washington, DC. The legal manifestation is the White House refusing to abide by a Supreme Court decision based on the Constitution. Underlying that is an attempt to use the novel 1984 as a blueprint for authoritarianism versus democracy. It was supposed to be a warning. But yesterday's comments in the Oval Office indicate another book is now being followed...Mein Kampf is being followed." **Frederick** continued, "Threats to jail Americans in foreign extermination camps if they disagree with the would-be king dictator now in the White House. So who's next to be kidnapped and thrown into a foreign prison? Are we returning to the 1860s, pre-Civil War America? Evil."

Senator Sara Gelser Blouin (D – Corvallis, Albany, and South Salem) shared, "I've been thinking recently about how things that one day might seem unthinkable suddenly somehow become normal and tolerable." **Gelser Blouin** spoke of traveling to Germany with her four children, where they visited the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. The visit included a one-and-a-half-mile walk from the train to the camp, which was the same walk taken by the people imprisoned and killed there. **Gelser Blouin** reflected, "Tens of thousands of internees walked those steps. Past houses. Playing children. Workers. People cooking dinner. They saw all of those people going in and not coming back out. But it became normal...What's happening now matters to all of us. Let's not let it be normal."

Senator Chris Gorsek (D - Gresham) called on Congress to uphold the fundamental principle of separation of powers in the US Constitution, saying, “Whether you like the President or not, the President has done some things that violate the Constitution, that violate separation of powers. And what many of us are simply asking is for Congress to protect their powers and stand up against these unconstitutional actions, including this idea that we can send American citizens offshore. That’s not the United States I grew up in.”

On Wednesday, April 16th, **Senator Khanh Pham (D - Portland)** highlighted the Trump administration’s blatant disregard of court orders to facilitate the return of Kilmar Abrego García, a legally protected Maryland man who the Trump Administration admitted was deported in error. **Pham** relayed the threat that Trump made in a meeting at the White House this week with El Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele, saying: “Homegrown criminals [are] next.” Meaning, as legal immigrants are rounded up and marked for deportation without due process, the president is threatening to do the same to US citizens.

Pham remarked, “Our Constitution is in crisis, due process and the courts are blatantly ignored, checks and balances are being eviscerated, and dictators are joking with the President of the United States about how many more prisons they need to build to house US citizens.” She continued, “Now is the time to sound the alarm. Now is the time to call out this attack on our Constitution, our civil liberties and civil rights as the authoritarian power grab that it is. Now is the time to turn to your neighbor and commit to staying connected and staying united, in the face of this attempt to divide us. It is not too late, and it has never been more important.”

The Senators’ statements, offered under a daily order of business known as “remonstrances,” can be viewed on the Oregon Legislature’s website:

Senator Patterson: bit.ly/Patterson-remarks

Senator Frederick: bit.ly/Frederick-remarks

Senator Gelser Blouin: bit.ly/GelserBlouin-remarks

Senator Gorsek: bit.ly/Gorsek-remarks

Senator Pham: bit.ly/SenPham-remarks

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