



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 23, 2025

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Senate Democrats Welcome Public Participation to Shape Legislative Progress

Oregonians attending town halls advise and inspire Senate Democratic agenda

SALEM, OR – In a recent [guest column in the Portland Tribune](#), Senate Majority Leader Kayse Jama observed, “We are seeing in national politics what can happen when leaders stop caring about their connections to the public.” By contrast, Senate Democrats in Oregon maintain close ties with their constituents and carry voters’ values into their work in the Oregon Legislature.

Input from the public drives Senate progress on economic opportunity, health care, housing, community safety, and individual rights. A set of town hall events held just as the legislative session reached the midpoint drew more than 200 Oregonians out to hear from their state Senators and to reassert the priorities of their communities.

“People in my district are engaged and eager to participate in their democracy,” said **Senator Deb Patterson (D – Salem)**. “At our April town hall, I heard from numerous people who wanted a stable economy, and who expressed concerns about continued access to needed services, particularly for seniors, veterans, and the most vulnerable.”

Senators gave updates on legislative business, including bills protecting Oregon values. Bills to keep immigration status off rental applications, prevent book bans by out-of-state extremists, and protect people informing others of their legal rights all have passed the Senate.

Other key topics were health care, housing, and education.

“I heard from my community about their frustrations and concerns with the federal government and their desire to be more involved with the legislative process, said **Senator Janeen Sollman (D – Hillsboro)**. “It is so important to continue to hold these opportunities for our constituents who want to know their legislators are listening, accessible and willing to engage in conversation.”

Senator Mark Meek (D – Gladstone) gave updates on transportation, housing, and economic development at his town hall. “My constituents all have first-hand experience with roads, traffic, and the cost of living, and I have to know what they’re dealing with when I make policy

decisions,” said **Senator Meek**. “I’ll carry their input into the second half of this session, when I’ll be advancing a bill to encourage condo development, pushing for accountability in our transportation systems, and adopting a responsible state budget.”

At a Eugene town hall, **Senator James I. Manning Jr. (D – Eugene, Elmira & Veneta)** heard his constituents’ concerns around combatting extremism and preserving our democracy, among other issues. “People advocated strongly for keeping Oregon’s vote-by-mail system and safeguarding our democracy,” Sen. Manning said. “They can be confident I’m defending our voting rights in the Senate.”

“Meeting with constituents is energizing and keeps me centered on representing their interests in Salem,” said **Senator Sara Gelsler Blouin (D-Corvallis, Albany & South Salem)**. “I’m grateful to the dozens of individuals that shared their perspective on how best to protect democracy, our communities, and how to respond to and prepare for rapid changes from the federal government.”

Participants at Senator Gelsler Blouin’s Community Listening Session were especially concerned about transportation infrastructure, particularly in North Albany, and statewide housing policies. Other concerns were the impact of tariffs on local farmers, fear in the community about deportation policies, access to inclusive education opportunities, and a commitment to due process for every person in Oregon. The event was accessible to all, with an American Sign Language interpreter present for the duration of the meeting.

Voter voices will continue to guide Senate Democrats as the legislative session advances. Four constituent events are scheduled through early May.

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