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Senate Democrats Unanimously Oppose Three Bills to Strengthen Oregon's Ethics Laws

Salem, OR - Today, Senate Democrats rejected three proposals to strengthen ethics laws for both the legislature and state and local campaigns in Oregon. The Oregon Senate will later consider two bills introduced by Governor Kate Brown expanding the Oregon Government Ethics Commission and clarifying the role of the spouse or partner of the Governor.

"Senate Republicans supported Governor Brown's efforts to prioritize ethics reform early this session, and we believe the proposals passed today in the Senate are important first steps in restoring transparency and accountability to Oregon government," said Senate Republican Leader Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day). "These additional ethics bills rejected by Senate Democrats would have shown Oregonians the legislature is serious about creating the highest ethical standards possible to rebuild the trust of Oregonians."

Senate Democrats rejected the three ethics bills on a party-line vote. SB 940, carried by Senator Brian Boquist (R-Dallas), makes "vote trading" illegal for legislators, ensuring they put their constituents first and not vote based on future promises of campaign contributions; SB 853, carried by Senator Tim Knopp (R-Bend), places high-ranking agency and elected officials under oath when testifying before the legislature; and SB 852, carried by Senator Ferrioli, makes submitting false information in a candidate voters' pamphlet statement illegal.

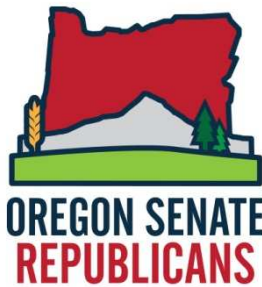
"While we're pleased the legislature is taking steps toward strengthening ethics in Oregon's government, rejecting these additional bills to strengthen ethics laws proves Senate Democrats aren't serious about restoring trust and accountability with Oregon citizens," said Senator Boquist. "Most Oregonians already believe trading votes for campaign cash is illegal,

so why would Democrats oppose outlawing vote trading?"

Senate Republicans also submitted a letter to Senate Rules Committee Chair Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland) requesting the immediate consideration and passage of HJR 31 out of committee. HJR 31 proposes an amendment to the Oregon Constitution that would give the legislature powers of impeachment of statewide elected officials. Currently, Oregon is the only state in the nation without statewide impeachment powers.

"Democrats have less than a month to pass additional ethics reforms needed to protect Oregonians from ethical misconduct by their leaders," said Senator Ferrioli. "Let's hope they don't stop with Governor Brown's proposals and prove that they are serious about restoring integrity in Oregon government."

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