



Oregon Senate Republicans

PRESS RELEASE

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2021 Session Begins Unconstitutionally

SALEM, Ore. – Today, the Oregon Senate began to fulfill its constitutional mandate to conduct the people’s business in 2021. At the same time, the Democratically-controlled Senate passed unconstitutional rules that lock the public out of their Legislature.

Article 4 Section 14 of the Oregon Constitution states, “*deliberations of each house... shall be open.*” But under the rules, the public may not enter the Capitol, give public in-person testimony, nor view the people’s business in-person. The move continues anti-public involvement rules from last year’s legislative sessions. All the while big box stores, schools, and even the California Legislature are partially open to the public.

Senate Republican Leader, Fred Girod (R-Lyons), released the following statement:

“The people have a right to participate in their democracy,” said Senate Republican Leader Fred Girod (R-Lyons). “This participation doesn’t stop after they vote in November and locking the public out of their house is just wrong. Their input is imperative to good public policy.”

“The decision to lock the public out of their Capitol isn’t based on science – not even close,” Leader Girod continued. “We are nearly a year into this pandemic. We have data and information on how to make public spaces safe. Some restaurants are open, big box stores are open, and even California, a state whose COVID case numbers are among the grimmest in the county, has acknowledged the importance of allowing the people to safely access their capitol.”

“Some things are sacred, and the public’s full participation in their democracy is one of those things.”

As of yesterday, California has the third-highest daily reported cases per capita in the county. Oregon is ranked 48th.

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