



**OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE**

March 18, 2021

House Republican Leader Christine Drazan  
House Majority Leader Barbara Smith Warner  
Oregon State Capitol

Dear Leaders Drazan and Smith Warner,

As we navigate the daily challenges of operating the 2021 legislative session during the COVID-19 pandemic, I have been committed to four top priorities: safety, transparency, strong public participation, and the completion of the people's work.

So far, we have been able to create a safe workplace while ensuring transparency and strong public participation. It hasn't been easy, and it hasn't been perfect. We have had many conversations about how we can improve committee procedures for both legislators and the public. I value all constructive feedback and will continue to do everything I can to make this session operate as smoothly as possible.

House members have been hard at work, and our committees are sending out many good bills for the chamber to consider. I am asking for your help to ensure we can meet those four priorities as we move into the next phase of our legislative work.

Next week, we are scheduled for 19 hours on the House floor. Several legislators who are not yet eligible for a vaccine have expressed concerns that this additional time on the floor will create unnecessary and additional risks of spreading COVID-19 among staff, legislators, and our families. The Oregon Health Authority has confirmed that decreasing the amount of time we spend together in close proximity reduces the risk of transmission. Therefore, I am requesting your assistance in the following actions to ensure our floor sessions are as safe and efficient as possible:

- Encourage your members to come to the floor promptly – when we convene and when votes are being taken – so that we can get to work immediately and minimize “down time” on the floor;
- Intervene, as necessary, to remind members to wear masks properly and keep a safe distance when they are talking to each other on the floor or in the gallery;
- Encourage members not to congregate too closely in the gallery;
- Monitor the number of members on the floor and support an equal distribution of Democratic and Republican members doing their work in the gallery or in their offices; and
- Collaborate to suspend the requirement that all bills be read in full, if not for the rest of the session then on a daily basis, or at minimum for bipartisan bills longer than five pages.

We all have a responsibility to keep each other safe. Until the county risk levels broadly reach the Lower Risk category and more members, staff and our family members are vaccinated, we have to work together to do the people's work safely.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

State Representative Tina Kotek

cc: House Members and Staff