

Reforming Oregon's Legislative Democracy: Transformative Solutions for a Post-Pandemic Legislature



Alexander Vasquez, Aleesha Kazi, Sophie Goodwin-Rice

Student Task Force on Improving Oregon's Legislative Democracy



Aleesha Kazi



Sophie Goodwin-Rice



Alexander Vasquez



Sarah Dean



Evan Kohne



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39 Interviews



12 Elected Officials & Staff



19 Advocates & Lobbyists



5 Agency Staff

2 Main Question Categories: Effectiveness & Accessibility

Question Examples



How has your organization's **daily routine/work** changed compared to in-person sessions due to COVID-19?



Before the pandemic, what were the best **legislative strategies** that worked well to cause change?



What **partners** do you hear from the most during in the virtual session?



What have been the **most challenging** aspects of the virtual session?



Report Overview

Problems

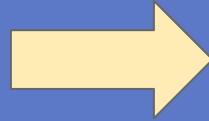
Digital Divide

Infodemic

Relationship Building

Language Access

Committees



Solutions

Institutional
Capacity

Accessibility



The image shows the Oregon State Capitol building in Salem, Oregon, under a clear blue sky. The building is a large, light-colored stone structure with a prominent central dome topped by a statue. In the foreground, there is a green lawn with several people walking. Pink cherry blossom trees are visible on the left and right sides of the frame. A large, semi-transparent blue diamond is centered over the building, and the word "Recommendations" is written in white text across its center.

Recommendations

Technical Changes to Increase Institutional Capacity & Accessibility in Committees

R6: Committee Process Recommendations

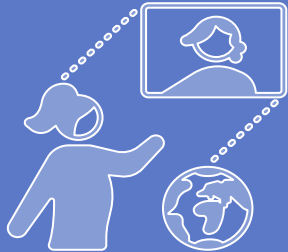
All committees should extend the window for testimony submission, keeping agendas consistently up-to-date, and requiring committee chairs to notify the public how many people are lined up to testify for each bill.



Increasing Access to Participation

R1: Digital Live Remote Testimony

The Legislature should pass HB 2560 this legislative session, and subsequently work towards requiring the Legislative Assembly itself to provide options for digital live remote testimony.



R2: Expanding Broadband Access

The Legislature needs to allocate funds towards expanding broadband throughout Oregon to support digital live systems.



Increasing Access to Participation

R3: Expanding Capitol Language Access



The Legislature should pass **HB 3264** which requires:

- The Legislature to provide translator and simultaneous interpreter services free of charge to facilitate witness participation in committee hearings or informal meetings with one or more elected officials
- Each Senator and Representative to develop a language access plan for their offices for better outreach to non-English proficiency constituents

Increasing Access to Participation

R4: Relationship Building

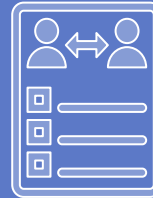
Legislators should engage in partnerships and proactive relationship-building with CBOs to build relationships with Oregon's historically underrepresented communities.



R5: Legislative Outreach

Legislators and legislative offices should prioritize legislative outreach strategies to keep constituents informed and engaged.

- Issue-based town hall events
- E-newsletters
- Social media



Building Institutional Capacity

R7: Legislator Compensation

The Legislature should revive the Public Officials Compensation Commission (POCC) to study, evaluate, and set competitive legislative salaries.



R8: Increasing Staff

The Legislature should invest in hiring another legislative staffer per legislative office and agency staff as needed.



R9: Increasing the Length of session

The Legislature should increase the Short Session from 35 to 160 days.

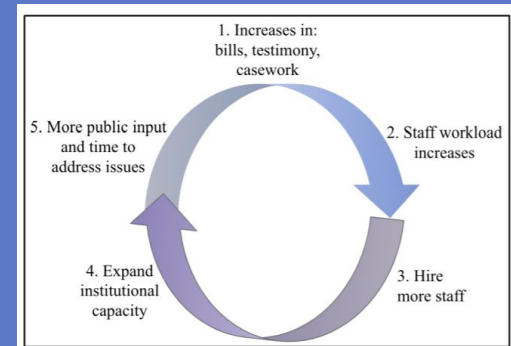


Figure 1: A diagram explaining the cycle of building institutional capacity

Key Takeaways For Long-Term Solutions




Continuing the Conversation:

- ❖ Oregon is changing!
- ❖ Increased Accessibility + Increased Institutional Capacity = more effective legislative democracy
- ❖ Retention, Representation, Responsiveness

Other Considerations

- ❖ Remote legislators



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**QUESTION
&
ANSWERS**