

## **House Special Committee on Modernizing the People's Legislature**

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### **Committee Meeting Topics:**

The House Special Committee on Modernizing the People's Legislature held informational and public hearings during the 2021 session on the following topics:

- a) 2005 – 2006 Public Commission on the Legislature;
- b) Public Access through Language and Translation Services and Virtual Testimony;
- c) the Capitol Building Experience as a Workplace and a Place to Visit and Learn about Oregon;
- d) Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Inclusion;
- e) Serving in the Legislature and Legislative Pay;
- f) Technology's Role in the Legislative Process;
- g) School Tours and Civics Education;
- h) the Challenges of Being a Legislator and Navigating Other Employment;
- i) Remote Participation in Committees;
- j) Reforming Oregon's Legislative Democracy; and
- k) Ethics, Professional Responsibility, and Duties.

### **Grouped Discussion Items and Presenter Recommendations**

#### Improving citizen access to the legislative process:

- Greeters, including bilingual or multilingual greeters, and kiosk about the legislative process
- Public Access room (similar to Capitol Club) with staff to explain the legislative process, with printers, etc.
- LPRO language access coordinator and translators
- Ensuring equal amount of time to testify for people who need an interpreter
- Bilingual summaries
- Make virtual testimony permanent (through Chamber and Committee rules)
- Process improvements for virtual testimony
- Increased signage about what is occurring in each committee room
- Increase accessibility to the legislative process via technology
- Remote testimony options and how to integrate with in-person hearings
- Broadband access for all Oregonians
- Relationships with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) engaging in responsive community outreach
- Legislative outreach to improve services to constituent communities
- Extending the window for testimony submission

- Keeping agendas up-to-date and notifying the public in committee of how many people are signed up to testify for each bill

Improving civics education (adults and kids) and student/school access:

- Evaluation and expansion of Virtual School Tours
- More places for visiting children to congregate
- Outreach to leadership programs
- Connect with other programs in schools (i.e. FFA)
- Taking the Capitol to the state and partnerships with local historical societies or community organizations
- Funding to provide education/training about the legislative process given by community organizations
- Including civics education bill contents in resolution
- Credit for internships
- Costs of legislative civics programs and support through partnerships
- Need for an instructor of record at the Legislative Assembly
- Elements of a pilot program

Improving building facilities for staff, lobby, and public

- Provide child care or rooms for child care for the public
- Drinking water and water bottle filling station
- Better wi-fi
- More plugs and add USB ports
- Signage letting people know how they can enter the building (in relation to doors being locked)
- More transportation options to get to the Capitol from the parking lots
- Repurpose old phone booths
- Success measures

Increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the Legislative Assembly

- Cultural audit
- Training and development
- Funding for DEI Committee administrator or shared staffing; resources for events and forums for help support and building community
- Measures of success for DEI efforts – climate survey

Increasing BIPOC staffing access/opportunities

- Open Houses to find and vet support staff
- Increase per-member FTE allotment from 1.5

- Increase support in the form of child care, housing, transportation (versus salary)
- Staff needs to be more diverse, paid more, and from the communities they serve
- Legislative support for internships and fellowships

#### Barriers to serving in the legislature

- How legislatures set pay and at what level (living wage or tied to average income)
- Minnesota Legislative Salary Council example
- Increase member support in the form of child care, housing, transportation (versus salary)
- Invest in Latinx community: not many people can jump straight to a state office
- Intentional focus on Latino community

#### Internal Processes/Institutional Capacity

- Legislator engagement in technology decisions
- Increasing the number of legislative and agency staff members
- Increasing the amount of time that the Legislature is in session
- Reviewing and clarifying the scope of privilege and legislative rules and the scope of employment for Legislative Counsel