

Discussion Draft for the House Special Committee on Modernizing the People's Legislature

June 2, 2021 – REVISED

Whereas 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) Alternative voting methods;
- h) School Tours and Civics Education;
- i) the Challenges of Being a Legislator and Navigating other Employment;
- j) Remote Participation in Committees;
- k) Student research on "Reforming Oregon's Legislative Democracy;"
- l) Professional Ethics Standards for Legislative Nonpartisan Offices; and

Whereas the House of Representatives passed House Concurrent Resolution 24 in 2017; and

Whereas in accordance with HCR 24, Information Services and the Legislative Policy and Research Office created the necessary infrastructure to accommodate remote participation in House of Representatives and Senate Committees; and

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic in Oregon led to the closure of the Oregon State Capitol to the public and necessitated that members of the 81st Legislative Assembly participate in committees remotely; and

Whereas Oregonians also faced wildfires and an ice storm in 2020 and 2021 and it is prudent for the Legislative Assembly to be prepared for other emergencies that impact its work; and

Whereas the hard work of Legislative Administration and the Legislative Policy and Research Office made remote committee participation possible and a success; and

Whereas Visitor Services is responsible for guided tours of the Capitol and works with the Department of Education to develop lesson plans supporting a Capitol tour and that includes civics lesson plans; and

Whereas the Office of the Chief Clerk also provides civics education programs during session and the interim and is a preeminent provider of state civics education and youth participation in legislative democracy; and Whereas Visitor Services and the Office of the Chief Clerk are able and willing to provide more inclusive access to the Capitol, the People's Legislature, and Oregon Civics Education; and

Whereas the Oregon Capitol is a visitor destination and the Legislative Administrator, under ORS 173.270, has responsibility for the permanent art and rotating exhibits in the Oregon Capitol with the Oregon Arts Commission overseeing Oregon's Percent for Art Collection and the Oregon State Capitol Foundation providing funding for exhibits through the Pacific Wonderland License Plate sales; and

Whereas the Oregon Capitol is also a workplace where many people conduct business; and

Whereas the members of Legislative nonpartisan offices must meet the ethical standards of their respective licensing boards; and

Whereas Oregon is made up of diverse communities who want to understand and feel empowered to engage in the legislative process, and everyone needs to be heard, regardless of race, ethnicity, languages spoken, or disability;

Be it resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:

- (1) This concurrent resolution constitutes a rule of proceeding of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-First Legislative Assembly.
- (2) Committees and subcommittees of the Senate and House of Representatives and joint committees and subcommittees of the Legislative Assembly shall continue to accept remote testimony.
- (3) The Oregon Legislative Education and Outreach Office (herein, OLEOO) shall be created as an independent office of the Legislative Branch, and adopted by the Oregon Legislative Assembly as the civics education and outreach department of the Oregon Legislative Assembly. The existing civics education programs, The Civics Master Plan (herein, The Plan), are in compliance with the Oregon Department of Education's curriculum standards for students in primary and secondary grades and provide instruction in Oregon's form of government. The Plan shall be made available to all Oregon school districts for use in classroom settings and to fulfill civics education requirements. The office shall be administered by an OLEOO Director who shall employ at least one (1 FTE) licensed Oregon Teacher in addition to as many support staff as needed to fulfill the assigned mission. There shall be space allocated for the OLEOO office in the Oregon State Capitol or in a building in or around the Capitol Mall.
- (4) Visitor Services will continue to expand and revise lesson plans and other resources and make use of the education resources created by the Office of the Chief Clerk to facilitate inclusive access to the Capitol, including remote participation by community groups for children and adults.
- (5) Legislative Administration and the Legislative Policy and Research Office shall continue to improve language translation and interpretation services to ensure the public has better knowledge about and access to the legislative process.
- (6) This Committee recommends that ORS Chapter 173 be amended to align with Oregon Rules of Professional Conduct.
- (7) The Oregon Arts Commission shall convene a review of and discussion about the permanent art installations in the Capitol Rotunda and House and Senate Chambers to ensure that the Capitol's art is diverse and welcoming to all Oregonians.
- (8) Legislative Administration shall research adding digital signage outside of the Committee Hearing Rooms and on the meeting livestreams to provide information about what measure is currently being heard in committee.

- (9) Legislative Administration shall research how to make the Capitol a more user-friendly environment for all people who work in it, including the Lobby and public.
- (10) The Office of the Chief Clerk shall research the cost and feasibility of upgrading the voting system in the House of Representatives.
- (11) The House of Representatives shall continue to invest in emergency preparedness.
- (12) The House of Representatives shall review the progress made on these recommendations during the 2023 legislative session.

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