

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:  
APPROPRIATIONS  
BUDGET  
ENVIRONMENT AND  
PUBLIC WORKS  
FOREIGN RELATIONS  
RULES AND  
ADMINISTRATION

April 2, 2025

Chair Jama, Vice Chair Bonham, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for considering SB 952, which would ensure that Oregon is well-represented in the United States Senate, no matter what contingencies may arise.

As we know from our civics lessons in school, each state is represented by two U.S. Senators. Both of those voices matter. The people of Oregon have entrusted me with one of those seats, which I use to fight for the foundations that families need to thrive: housing, health care, education, and good-paying jobs.

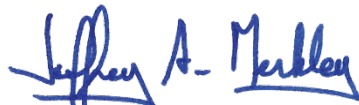
Every year, I host a town hall in each of Oregon's 36 counties so I can hear first-hand about the needs and priorities of our communities, then I fight to get those projects funded. Over the last few years, my friend and colleague Ron Wyden and I have delivered about 475 of these community-initiated projects to every corner of the state.

In addition, I have team members all over Oregon connecting with local leaders from small businesses, non-profits, civic organizations, and local governments. We use the information we gain from these discussions to push Oregon's priorities with federal agencies, in annual federal spending bills, and in important legislation, from annual priority-setting for the Army Corps to disaster response efforts. Other members of my team are on-call to assist the people of Oregon, including veterans needing help accessing their benefits, students navigating the process to afford a college education, and seniors trying to sort out Social Security issues. If Oregon were to be without a Senator, due to injury or death, services to Oregonians in every community would be significantly impacted.

As you well know from your work here, the legislative process is not about waving a magic wand. It takes months of laying groundwork, building coalitions, lining up support from agencies and stakeholders, then finding the right moment to push for a vote. If Oregon is left without a Senator for several months because a vacancy occurs and current law does not provide for an appointment, then that critical work will not happen, and it could have significant repercussions for the people of Oregon.

Currently, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, Oregon is one of only four states that leaves a vacancy unfilled until a special election. The proposed legislation before you is an important insurance policy to guarantee that Oregonians' voices are heard when the Senate is considering important issues that will impact their lives. I encourage you to pass it.

Thank you,



Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator