



November 13th, 2015
For Immediate Release

Contacts: Larry Harvey, 541-664-6622

DENNIS RICHARDSON TO LEGISLATURE - ADDRESS ETHICS & PUBLIC RECORDS REFORM IN 2016
Richardson appeals to Presiding Officers to ensure reforms are on the legislative agenda

Central Point, Oregon – Former six-term legislator Dennis Richardson called upon the presiding officers of the Oregon Legislature to ensure that the 2016 legislative session delivers promised ethics, public records, and campaign reforms to Oregonians. In a letter to Senate President Peter Courtney and House Speaker Tina Kotek, Richardson outlines five legislative concepts that he believes will begin to restore trust to Oregonians in the wake of the Kitzhaber scandal.

"Upon Governor Kate Brown's swearing in, Oregonians were promised real ethics reforms and nearly a year later, very little has been done to restore the trust that was lost," stated Richardson. "The media has recently reported that a legislative workgroup that was going to meet and bring concepts forward hasn't convened, and priority bills are due for drafting before the end of this month. There's still time to enact meaningful reforms in 2016." Richardson also cited concerns about the recent "F" grade Oregon received from the Center for Public Integrity as a reason to reach out to the presiding officers.

The five concepts Richardson believes should be prioritized are:

- Public records reform with a focus on reducing time delays and fees;
- Allowing the public to vote on including an impeachment process into the state's constitution;
- Giving every political party in Oregon the right to a taxpayer-funded primary election, regardless of major or minor party status;
- Ending the "miscellaneous" cash contribution and expenditure designation in Orestar; and
- Requiring that a candidate's entire voter pamphlet statement be truthful.

"These are five bill concepts that came forward in 2015 that are the lightest political lifts, yet would be a significant first step to regaining credibility in the eyes of voters," Richardson explained. "To do nothing at this point would be yet another broken promise to Oregonians." Richardson would like to see the legislature also tackle whistleblower protections for public employees. "Public employee whistleblowers were paid over \$1 million in settlements in September alone – that practice has to end. It's time we had a clear path for employees who come forward to shine a light on wasteful business practices or suspected corruption."

Richardson is hopeful that the legislature will fulfill the promises made at the beginning of the 2015 session after Kitzhaber's resignation, not delay further the meaningful reforms needed to ensure open and honest government.

###