November 9, 2020
Happy Valley, OR

Statement from Rep. Janelle Bynum

We are at a critical moment in our nation's and state’s history. It compels us to reimagine the way we live our lives, conduct our business and the merits on which we select our leaders. Between the COVID-19 pandemic, racial strife, and climate disasters, this year has called into question whether we can continue with the status quo. More importantly, it is a chance to innovate and push the boundaries while casting aside systems and structures that are inequitable or no longer serve us best.

I am honored to have been chosen by the constituents of East Portland, Damascus, Gresham, Boring, North Clackamas, and Happy Valley to return to Salem for the 2021-2022 term. After much reflection, last Thursday I began asking my colleagues to select me as their next speaker of the house. Behind the governor and along with the senate president, this is the most important leader in our state government.

Transparency, diversity of thought, and simplicity are my core values as a legislator and leader. Everyday I bring these principles to life in both my words and deeds. Now, more than ever before, our state needs a leader who listens to the electorate, leads by empowering her colleagues, and understands both the social and financial implications of policies so important to Oregonians.

I am both credentialed and battle tested. I hold a degree in Electrical Engineering from Florida A&M University, a Master’s in Business Administration from top-ranked University of Michigan, and was a fellow at Harvard University’s Kennedy School State and Local Executives in Government Program last summer. I have successfully run two highly competitive races for my House seat, garnering the support of labor, small businesses and a broad cross section of advocates. For the last 13 years, I have run my family business with over 200 employees and thousands of daily customers. Since taking the helm of the Judiciary Committee, I have proven I have the temperament, intellectual capacity, and interpersonal skills necessary to navigate tough conversations and complex policy decisions.

Under the current rules and protocol, On Monday, November 16, 2020, the Oregon House Democrats will select their nominee for Speaker and effectively determine the chamber’s winner. I am asking my colleagues for an open process and an honest chance for a qualified and passionate woman of color to lead the Oregon House of Representatives. In this moment of shattering norms and elevating often unheard voices, I feel called to run and would be honored to serve.