Westlund Welcomed by Senate Democratic Caucus

by Bend Weekly News Sources

â€œSenator will add valuable perspective from Central Oregon to the caucus.â€•

The Senate Democratic Caucus today welcomed Senator Ben Westlund (D-Bend) as its newest member. The welcome came after Westlund announced that he is changing his registration from Independent to Democrat.

â€œWe are very happy to have Senator Westlund join our caucus and the Democratic Party,â€• said Senate Majority Leader Kate Brown (D-Portland). â€œSenator Westlund will bring a wealth of experience and a valuable Central Oregon perspective to our discussions on critical issues like health care, education and renewable energy.â€•

In announcing his decision to join the Democratic Party, Westlund said:

â€œThe people have sent the message that they are ready for a new direction and the Democrats have been given an opportunity to make progress on the big issues that will move our state forward. . . . I have been inspired by the message sent by the people and I think Democrats value the help of Independents to get us back on track.

â€œI have said that being an Independent doesnâ€™t mean standing alone, it means choosing who you stand with. This past month, I have found myself rooting for the Democratsâ€™ success on healthcare, on education funding, on expanding renewable energy. And I think itâ€™s time to get off the sidelines and stand with them.â€•

In welcoming Westlund, who will become the 18th member of the Senate Democratic Caucus, Brown noted that â€œSenator Westlund has always been willing to work across party lines. Everyone in the caucus is looking forward to working with him as we move ahead on the issues that matter to all Oregonians.â€•

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