

# Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR)



## Washington, DC Office:

313 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 224-3753  
[www.merkley.senate.gov](http://www.merkley.senate.gov)

Jeff Merkley, Oregon's junior Senator, was elected to the U.S. Senate in 2008. Merkley began his career in public service as a 19-year old intern for Oregon's former Senator Mark Hatfield, and Merkley now represents Oregon in Hatfield's former Senate seat.

Merkley is a native of Myrtle Creek, Oregon, and the first in his family to attend college. He graduated with a degree in Public Policy from Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs; he is the first in his family to attend college. After college, he secured a presidential fellowship at the Pentagon and then worked as a national security analyst in the Congressional Budget Office. In 1991, Merkley returned to Oregon as director of Portland's Habitat for Humanity and by 1998, he was elected to the Oregon House, where he became Democratic Leader in 2003 and Speaker in 2007.

Merkley was named to the exclusive Appropriations Committee in the 113th Congress. He serves on the following Appropriations Subcommittees: Agriculture; Commerce, Justice and Science; Interior and Environment; Labor HHS; and Legislative Branch. Merkley is also a member of the following Senate Committees: Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, where he Chairs the Economic Policy Subcommittee; Environment and Public Works, where he Chairs the Green Jobs Subcommittee and the New Economy Subcommittee; and Budget. Merkley has pledged to hold town hall meetings in all 36 Oregon counties every year he's in office. By February 2013, he had already held a town hall meeting in every county.

Since his election to the U.S. Senate, Merkley has introduced legislation to eliminate U.S. dependence on overseas oil by 2030, partnered with Sen. Carl Levin (D-Michigan) to secure new limits on risky trading by banks as part of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010, and worked to end deceptive retail mortgage lending practices.

He and fellow Oregon Senator Ron Wyden (D) re-introduced three bills in February 2013 that would designate over 100,000 acres of land as wilderness or preserved areas in Oregon. The legislation builds

upon their success in preserving two large tracts of land, spanning more than 200,000 acres, as Oregon wilderness in 2009.

Merkley is interested in increasing students' access to STEM courses. In the 113th Congress, Merkley sponsored the "STEM Education for the Global Economy Act," a bill similar to the "Preparing Students for the Global Economy Act of 2011" that he sponsored in the 112th Congress. The legislation is designed to increase student access to courses in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education subjects; provide additional resources to recruit, train, and support teachers of these subjects; and close student achievement gaps and improve college and career readiness in STEM fields. Merkley also plans to introduce legislation to create a grant program for middle and high school career technical education programs, allowing for more collaboration between educational institutions and employers.

In May 2013, Merkley introduced the "American Jobs in American Forests Act" (S. 891), legislation that would change a visa program designed to hire foreign workers to give forest jobs back to Oregonians.

In May 2013, Merkley successfully amended the Farm Bill to repeal what is known the Farmer Assurance Provision, section 735 of the "Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act" (federal budget sequestration) (H.R. 933), which was signed by President Obama on March 26, 2013. The provision has been dubbed the "Monsanto Protection Act" and prohibited federal courts from halting the sale or planting of genetically modified seeds. Oregon farmers are concerned about cross contamination from genetically modified crops, which could damage Oregon export markets or lead to patent infringement lawsuits.

## Recent visits to OSU

Sen. Merkley last visited campus in January 2010 for briefings on alternative energy sources.