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Bernie Sanders weighs in on Oregon politics, makes endorsement in Democratic primary

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Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders is the most prominent national figure to make an endorsement in Oregon's 3rd Congressional District race. Phil McAuliffe



By [Jamie Goldberg](#) | [The Oregonian/OregonLive](#)

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders has endorsed former Multnomah County Commissioner [Susheela Jayapal](#) in the Democratic primary for Oregon's 3rd Congressional District.

The endorsement from the nationally-recognized figure could be a boon for Jayapal in what is expected to be a competitive primary to replace retiring U.S. Rep. [Earl Blumenauer](#).

"For many years, Susheela Jayapal has been an outstanding progressive leader in Oregon," Sanders said in a statement. "From early in her career she has stood with working families as she advocated for workers rights, fought to strengthen support for immigrant and refugee communities, and took on big polluters. I look forward to serving with her in Congress."

Jayapal, state Rep. Maxine Dexter, a Portland Democrat, and Gresham City Councilor Eddy Morales are the top candidates vying to earn the Democratic nomination in the 3rd District.

"I'm honored and thrilled to have the support of Sen. Bernie Sanders, an unrelenting champion for affordable health care, climate action, and an economy that works for everyone and not just corporations and the wealthiest Americans," Jayapal said in a statement. "I'm proud to count Sen. Sanders among the dozens of leaders and organizations who know I'm the progressive champion Oregonians need fighting for our families and communities in Congress."

Democrats outnumber Republicans more than three to one in the district, which includes most of Multnomah County and stretches into Hood River and northeastern Clackamas counties. That means the real race to take over Blumenauer's seat will come in the Democratic primary, with the winner of the May primary expected to coast to victory in November.

Blumenauer has not endorsed any of the candidates in the race.

Jayapal's sister, Pramila Jayapal, has represented Seattle in Congress since 2017, developing a national profile as a progressive Democrat. Along with Sanders' endorsement, Jayapal has also been endorsed by her sister and U.S. Reps. Ro Khanna of California, Mark Pocan of Wisconsin and David Scott of Georgia.

Jayapal isn't the only candidate in the race who has been endorsed by a national figure. Morales touts the endorsement of former Georgia governor candidate Stacey Abrams, as well as endorsements from U.S. Reps. Becca Balint of Vermont, Ritchie Torres of New York and Mark Takano of California.

Dexter is endorsed by Shannon Watts, a gun violence prevention activist and founder of Moms Demand Action.

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