

JANEEN SOLLMAN
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 30



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

December 17, 2020

RE: Support for LC 21

To: Co-Chair Courtney, Co-Chair Kotek, and members of the Joint Interim Committee on the Third Special Session

I want to thank the committee for the opportunity to share my support for LC 21. We all understand the importance of in-person instruction. Returning students to classrooms SAFELY is a priority for every elected official in Oregon.

The problem: In “normal times” there would be insurance to cover infectious/communicable disease in Oregon’s 197 school districts, charter schools, Education Service Districts and community colleges. As of July 1, 2020, Pace Insurance no longer provides this coverage, nor does any other insurance company. If such coverage existed, we would not be here to bring this policy forward. School board members and school administrators in my district, and leaders across Oregon, have expressed high levels of concern regarding the uncertainty of how a lack of insurance coverage during these times could impact their operational budgets.

While this policy is a necessary step to protect classroom and educational service dollars, it is temporary, and will end when the Governor’s State of Emergency ends.

This policy will not protect the entities who do not follow OHA, ODE and OSHA guidelines. This policy does not prevent anyone from bringing a lawsuit forward. What this policy will simply provide is a safety net of protection to the entities involved who are following state guidelines and rules. A judge will determine continuance of a case brought forward. This policy provides an incentive to follow guidelines and continue to put safety first.

The work on this policy was not done alone or quickly. Rep Power and I convened a work group to discuss this concept. We invited seventeen various stakeholders to the virtual table, that included: OSBA, COSA, OTLA, OEA, OSEA, Oregon Student Association, Next Up, a parent of two Oregon students impacted by Autism, Confederated Tribes, Disability Rights Oregon, PCUN, Latino Action Network, AFL-CIO, OR Community Colleges, AFT, AFSME, and SEIU. As a result, the initial proposal presented has been modified many times to include the input from the more than eight meetings held and countless conversations. Not every stakeholder is in support of this concept, but we did what we could to bring them to the table, listen to the concerns and provide changes that were suggested.

Safety of students and staff will remain the top priority and choice for parents will remain an option. If you do not feel it is safe to send your child to school during this time, nothing in this policy takes that

JANEEN SOLLMAN
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 30



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

choice from you and Oregon is still required to provide an education to your child. In absence of insurance coverage, we need to ACT NOW so that those covered by this policy can reopen when allowed to do so and have confidence and the much-needed safety net for their tight-budgets.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janeen Sollman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Janeen Sollman
State Representative-House District 30