

TO: Oregon Senate Rules Committee

Re: SJR 4, SJR 3

My name is Laura Allen, and I live with my husband on the North Coast of Oregon in Seaside. Both parties have unfairly used walkouts as a tactic to oppose legislation. But in the last 2 years the GOP has completely disrupted the democratic process with six walkouts. The quorum requirement has been weaponized by the GOP minority to control the legislature despite the will of the majority of Oregon voters.

What I am saying is more than just rhetoric. The walkouts have killed hundreds of bills including funds for disaster relief, funding for mental health care, wildfire protection, protection of drinking water sources, and more. The walkouts tell voters that our votes don't matter. The walkouts tell us that a GOP minority will make decisions about how our tax dollars are used, how resources are distributed, how schools, transportation, and natural resources are managed, and so much more. That is not a democracy or even a republic. It is a dictatorship.

I urge you to help voters take back our democracy by voting yes on SJR 4 which is the first step to amend the Oregon Constitution and allow a simple majority to constitute a quorum. There is no reason at all for the 2/3 quorum requirement. A simple majority is sufficient for the legislature to conduct business. And, then neither party can use a quorum requirement to gain undemocratic control of the legislature.

I also urge you to support SJR 3 which would also amend the Constitution to provide that a member of the Legislature who, without permission or excuse, does not attend 10 or more scheduled legislative floor sessions of the Legislative Assembly is deemed to be engaging in disorderly behavior and is disqualified from holding office as Senator or Representative for the term following the member's current term of office. Again, this measure would apply to any member, regardless of party affiliation, who abuses the democratic process.

We need an end to these walkouts. I ask you take the first steps to restore the democratic functioning of our legislature by passing SJR 4 and SJR 3. Thank you.

Laura Allen
Seaside, Oregon
lauraallen@allenmead.com