



Chair Wagner, Co-chair Girod, Members of the Committee,

My name is Cassie Purdy and I am here on behalf of Oregon's farmworkers union to testify in favor of the slate of bills before the committee today.

Thank you for holding this hearing and allowing the people of Oregon to put on the record how weary and frustrated we are with the repeated walkouts and shut down of our legislative process. We cannot allow this to keep happening. It is completely unacceptable that the current structure of the legislature imposes no statutory punishments for failing to show up for work and stops all debate and progress on legislation that matters to Oregonians.

There are several issues that must be acknowledged in the discussion about walkouts.

The first is that every single senator and representative swore an oath to uphold the Oregon constitution and to faithfully discharge the duties of the office. The most fundamental duty of the office is to show up to work.

We need our lawmakers to stop obstructing and shutting down the legislature.

We need you - all of you - to show up every single day to work just like the rest of us do.

We need you - all of you - to answer our calls and emails and not disappear on taxpayer funded vacations at essential moments.

We need you - all of you - to take action after what has been a devastating year for Latinx Oregonians and our state's farmworkers who do not have the luxury of skipping

work when they don't feel like it and too often have been forced to work with unsafe conditions during a deadly pandemic that has brought double the rate of COVID to this community.

We need you - all of you - to do your jobs to help our communities who need vaccines, need testing, have lost work, have lost income, are at risk of losing housing and whose future depends on the decisions made this year by the legislature.

It is unacceptable that Oregonians are living under such uncertainty. It is unacceptable that funding for housing, for child care, for food assistance, could be held up because a small number of lawmakers don't know how to work with others and get things done.

And it is sad that it takes legislation for lawmakers to keep their oath of office and show up to work. But that is where we are now and that is why we are here in support of Senate Bills 261 and 262 and Senate Joint Resolutions 3 and 4.

Oregon farmworkers have done their job through wildfire smoke, ice storms, intense heat, and a global pandemic to ensure that Oregonians and people across this country have food on the table. They have done it as they or their families have been stricken by COVID at higher rates than other populations and they have faced sudden and unimaginable grief.

And yet, they show up to work every day. It's time to ensure that our lawmakers do, too.

Signed,

Cassie Purdy

Coalition Director

PCUN Oregon