



A STRONG VOICE FOR OREGON'S WORKERS

TO: Chair Wagner
Co-Chair Girod
Members of the Senate Rules Committee

FR: Catie Theisen, Oregon AFL-CIO

RE: Legislator Accountability; Support for

March 18, 2021

The Oregon AFL-CIO represents 300,000 workers across the state and is a voice for all workers in the legislative process. As such, AFL members day-in and day-out of this pandemic -- and before -- have shown up to work everyday to keep food on our tables, to keep our communities healthy, and to keep our economy running. And fundamentally, they expect their state lawmakers to do the same.

However, last year Republican lawmakers skipped work for 35 days -- more than a month -- and were still paid half a million dollars. This sends a signal to our essential workers that lawmakers can just skip work and keep collecting a taxpayer funded vacation. But, Oregon workers don't get paid when they simply decide not to show up to work. If a worker were to just skip work for 10 days -- or less -- they would get fired, with cause.

As a state, we should no longer accept this legislative behavior and that is why we are here in support of Senate Bills 261 and 262 and Senate Joint Resolutions 3 and 4.

When lawmakers take the oath of office, they swear to uphold the constitution and do the people's work. The first duty of a lawmaker is to show up for that work. There must be serious repercussions for those who refuse to do the work that Oregonians sent them to Salem to do.

And Oregonians agree. Overwhelmingly. 84 percent say that if you skip work 10 days in a row you should be banned from running for office again. 82 percent say that if lawmakers don't show up to work, the session should be extended and walkout lawmakers shouldn't get paid. And 78 percent say that lawmakers who don't show up shouldn't get paid and there should be fines for skipping work.

Essential workers have gone above and beyond in this pandemic. They are frontline workers, first responders, and the people who can't stay home and have to go to extraordinary lengths to get through this pandemic. They've done their duty to show up for Oregon families, communities, and our economy at-large. We ask lawmakers to do the same: to show up and do the hard work.

We ask state lawmakers to take action to get the legislature back to work and ask for your support of Senate Bills 261 and 262 and Senate Joint Resolutions 3 and 4.