

TO: State Senate Committee on Rules
FROM: Oregon non-profit health and human services providers
RE: Accountability measures in support of effective, efficient democratic processes
DATE: March 18, 2021

Chair Wagner, Vice-Chair Girod and Members of the Committee:

As non-profit health and human services providers, we are increasingly uncomfortable with tactics being employed to slow and shut down the legislative process in Oregon.

It is no secret that the triple threat of the pandemic, wildfires and economic recession has had devastating consequences in every corner of our state. **Policymakers at all levels should be focused on addressing these challenges and responding to the essential needs of Oregonians** — healthcare, housing, food security, jobs and more. Our legislative processes should be responsive to these needs, moving toward meaningful solutions as quickly as possible.

Yet this is not what we are observing today in the Oregon State Legislature. Instead, we see an increasing use of stall tactics — from forcing lengthy, out-loud readings of legislation on the floor, to outright boycotts of floor sessions. **Delays of much-needed action are unacceptable and do not in any way serve the interests of the “people’s business”.**

As organizations on the front lines of response to these crises, we share a vision for and dedication to resilient, thriving communities. The State Capitol is the place we go to ensure the voices of hard-hit communities are heard — to bring stories of resilience, data-driven solutions and advocate for the policy changes we need to realize a positive vision for the future. **We need legislators to listen closely and to work with urgency on behalf of all of our communities.** Too many vital programs and investments are at stake — decisions that directly affect the lives of countless Oregonians — to allow stall tactics and delays to continue.

We call on our elected officials to commit today to support effective, efficient democratic processes — and to focus the 2021 legislative session on addressing the critical health and human services needs of our communities.

Sincerely,

Kim Brick
Oregon Coast Community Action*

George Devendorf
Transition Projects

Jess Campbell
Rural Organizing Project

Amy Fellows
We Can Do Better*

Lee Cha
Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization (IRCO)

Michelle Glass
Rogue Action Center

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Daniel Hauser
Oregon Center for Public Policy

Megan Kemple
Oregon Climate and Agriculture Network

Susannah Morgan
Oregon Food Bank

Dominica Navarro
**Northwest Center for Alternatives
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**Organization listed for identification purposes only.*