

Submitter: Deena Mermann
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4145
Chair and Members of the Committee,

I submit this testimony in strong opposition to HB 4145.

The real threat to our democracy is not disagreement. It is not debate. It is not dissent. The real threat is when someone abuses their position of power to influence or affect the outcome of a vote.

Oregonians are tired of the lack of transparency within the Capitol. Voters are increasingly aware and actively engaged in what is happening in Salem. They are paying attention not only to policy outcomes, but to whether the legislative process itself is being respected.

In the House, there was an opportunity to correct course. Representative Bill Mannix was attempting to do the responsible thing — to re-refer HB 4145A to committee so it could be handled properly and transparently. That is how the legislative process is supposed to work. If we believe in good governance, we do not override process when it becomes inconvenient.

Unfortunately, that effort was disregarded and the bill was pushed forward anyway. That decision reinforced the very concerns Oregonians have about transparency and procedural integrity. Ignoring established process erodes public trust.

HB 4145 does not restore confidence. It deepens skepticism.

At a time when trust in institutions is fragile, advancing this bill sends a message that accountability can be sidestepped and that procedural rules are flexible when politically expedient. A YES vote on HB 4145 will not go unnoticed. Voters are watching closely, and there will be consequences at the ballot box.

I urge this committee to do the right thing. Let HB 4145 die in the Senate Rules Committee. Protect the integrity of the legislative process and demonstrate that abuse of power will not be tolerated.

Respectfully,
Deena Merimann