



# PRESS RELEASE

## OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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## **Legislature Passes Legislation to Help Oregonians Waiting on Unemployment**

*House Democrats condemn failure to advance Senate Bill 1702*

SALEM, Ore. – The Oregon Legislature passed two bills to help Oregonians who have been waiting on their unemployment claims.

Senate Bill 1701 increases the amount that an unemployed individual may earn from working part-time to \$300 (or one-third of their weekly benefit, whichever is greater) before losing their unemployment benefits. Current statute limits earnings to ten times the minimum wage or one-third of the individual's weekly benefit.

Senate Bill 1703 gives the Governor the ability to authorize the Oregon Department of Revenue to share information necessary to verify the identity or income level of a person seeking an unemployment or Pandemic Unemployment Insurance claim during this current emergency.

“These two measures are necessary and critical steps to streamline unemployment insurance and help Oregonians get back to work without losing the ability to provide for their families,” said Rep. Paul Holvey (D-Eugene), who carried both bills on the floor. “This is not going to solve all the problems, but it is a step in the right direction.”

A third measure, Senate Bill 1702, designed to remove a unique unemployment roadblock faced by many employees in public and private educational institutions, like bus drivers, janitors and food service workers, that forces them into the adjudication process and slows the wait for all workers in that process, failed in committee.

“I speak for the entire House Democratic caucus when I say we are incredibly frustrated by the defeat of Senate Bill 1702 in committee today,” said House Majority Leader Barbara Smith Warner (D-Portland). “For months we have been asking the Oregon Employment Department what the Legislature can do to speed up claims. When they finally bring us a bill to do just that – and, let me be clear, this would have made a difference for school janitors, bus drivers, and food service workers as well as every Oregonian who is waiting in adjudication – it got voted down unanimously by Senate Republicans. Struggling Oregonians deserve better.”

Senate Bill 1701 and 1703 now go to Gov. Kate Brown for consideration.

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