



OREGON LEGISLATURE

Senate President Peter Courtney

House Speaker Tina Kotek

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NEWS RELEASE

February 22, 2018

Contact:

Robin Maxey

(503) 986-1605

robin.maxey@oregonlegislature.gov

Megen Ickler

(503) 986-1204

megen.ickler@oregonlegislature.gov

LEADERS ASK OREGON LAW COMMISSION TO REVIEW HARASSMENT POLICIES

Joint Statement by Senate President Peter Courtney and House Speaker Tina Kotek:

“Today, we are asking the Oregon Law Commission to review current laws and policies regarding workplace harassment in the Capitol. Through their recommendations to improve the Legislature’s harassment protocols, we hope to make the Legislative Branch a safe and respectful workplace that is free of harassment.

“An independent review by the Oregon Law Commission will give us an outside perspective on how we can do better. We have asked the Commission to take a comprehensive look through an inclusive process that solicits input from legislators, interns, employees, lobbyists, and all who work in and visit the building. It is critical that we cultivate a harassment-free environment where everyone here is empowered to participate in the political process.”

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The Oregon Legislative Assembly

February 22, 2018

Lane Shetterly
Chair, Oregon Law Commission
University of Oregon School of Law
1221 University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403

Dear Mr. Shetterly:

The Oregon State Capitol should be a model workplace where everyone feels safe and can work without fear of being harassed. It shouldn't matter who you are or the title you hold.

Unfortunately, the Oregon Legislature is not free from workplace harassment. The power differential between elected officials and those who work in the Capitol creates a challenging environment.

In our effort to create a welcoming workplace for everyone in the Capitol, we are asking for your help. We are requesting that the Oregon Law Commission review and advise the Oregon Legislature on how best to revise its laws and policies related to workplace harassment. We ask that your work be completed in time for legislation to be drafted and rules adopted for the 2019 Legislative Session.

Specifically, we request the Commission do the following:

- Review the Legislature's legal ability to discipline members of the Legislature for misconduct. This should include intermediate measures to ensure the safety of Capitol users, such as restrictions on time, place, and manner of an accused's access to the Capitol.
- Examine the need for amending the Oregon Constitution to facilitate the timely discipline of members for misconduct.

- Review laws and rules governing harassment between lobbyists, the public, elected members, and employees of the Legislature. Make recommendations to facilitate a harassment-free workplace.
- Review laws and rules regarding complaint processes and make recommendations to improve clarity regarding timelines, notice, and confidentiality requirements.
- Review rules and laws that protect those who file complaints from retaliation and make recommendations for improvement.
- Engage and provide opportunity for all Capitol stakeholders, including Legislators, professional and member staff, lobbyists, and the public, to provide input.

We appreciate the importance of the work we have asked you to conduct. The independence and integrity that the Commission brings to the process is critical to ensuring a successful outcome. With your help, we can achieve our goal of being a workplace where all who engage in the policy making process can do so free of harassment.

Thank you.

Respectfully,



Tina Kotek
Speaker of the House



Peter Courtney
President of the Senate

cc:

The Honorable Kate Brown, Governor
The Honorable Ginny Burdick, Senate Majority Leader
The Honorable Jackie Winters, Senate Republican Leader
The Honorable Jennifer Williamson, House Majority Leader
The Honorable Mike McLane, House Republican Leader
Dexter Johnson, Legislative Counsel