



OFFICE OF THE HOUSE SPEAKER

900 Court St., N.E., Room H-269

Salem OR 97301

<http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/kotek>

NEWS RELEASE

December 5, 2018

Danny Moran, 503-986-1204

Danny.Moran@oregonlegislature.gov

Statement from House Speaker Tina Kotek on Oregon Court of Appeals Ruling

“I remain fully committed to making the Oregon State Legislature and the State Capitol a safe and inclusive environment for everyone. There is work underway to improve policies and procedures for reporting inappropriate behavior, along with better workplace training and education that will improve our culture. I remain focused on this work and implementing improvements will be among the Legislature’s top priorities when we convene in January 2019.

Among the most important ways to create a supportive work culture is the ability to promise confidentiality to those who report incidents of inappropriate behavior or harassment and do not want to be identified publicly.

The Legislature will comply with the recent court order. But I remain concerned that Tuesday’s ruling will undermine the Legislature’s ongoing work to maintain that confidentiality and have a chilling effect on reporting in the future. This is not a theoretical conversation. My office is already aware of individuals concerned about their confidentiality being violated.

I believe there were other ways to address the goal of the investigation without compromising the confidentiality of individuals who have reported inappropriate behavior. Unfortunately, the Labor Commissioner disagreed.

In turning over highly confidential information, I hope the Labor Commissioner can assure to all of the individuals who are identified in those records and wish to remain anonymous that their individual right to confidentiality will not be compromised when the protective order is lifted.

To those individuals who expected their information would be kept confidential, I am sorry that this process might violate your privacy. I support individuals who are willing to share their information publicly, and I believe everyone should be able to decide for themselves if their story becomes public. No one should make that decision for them, and no one should fear being publicly outed without their consent for reporting inappropriate behavior.

If we are to make meaningful change, we must ensure confidentiality for those who come forward and wish to remain anonymous.”

###