



**OREGON STATE SENATE**

The protection of our youth is a critical responsibility of our state government. We should be at the forefront of ensuring the safety and well being of Oregon’s children. It is why it surprises me that some of the changes that came forward in SB 51-A and SB 242-A were not on the books before. While 242 does mainly clarify the language and brings it up to date with terms used in other proceedings today, the reporting requirements of SB 51 I would have thought were in a while ago. I would have loved to have voted yes on these measures and do support their intent, however other circumstances in this state have informed my decision to vote no on this and every other piece of legislation this session.

The Constitution of the State of Oregon clearly states that “The deliberations of each house, of committees of each house or joint committees and of committees of the whole, shall be open...” This provision was put in place to ensure accountability and transparency to the people of the state that their Legislature was working in their best interest. The virtual format that is being used does not provide for an honest, open, and transparent discussion on the matters of this state.

We are seeing just how discriminatory these virtual sessions can be! The Majority Party has created a system that if you cannot afford internet you cannot be a part of the discussions. This “Pay to Play” approach is NOT the Oregon way. Between this and the heartbreaking examples of the elder and economically depressed members in our society struggling and getting frustrated over their challenges navigating this virtual environment, it cannot honestly be said that we are doing the peoples work. Additionally, the Governors restrictions and closure of the state have caused traditionally public places that would provide internet and support to said individuals be inaccessible.

The “People’s Work” should be considered an essential service and there for accessible in person. Because the people are still being denied their constitutional right to participate and lobby their legislature in an open manner, I cannot legitimize this session with a yes vote no matter the merit of the bill, and there for had to vote no.