

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.