

Chair Wagner and members of the Senate Committee On Rules,

I write today in opposition to SJR 4. I firmly believe that requiring a 2/3 majority for quorum is important to maintaining a healthy governing body.

This quorum requirement is one of the few available tools to prevent the potential tyranny of a simple majority. The reality is that while Democrats currently hold the majority, they are not by and large the majority party in Oregon. Un-affiliated voters account for nearly a third of Oregonians with Republican voter numbers following close behind. This tool was available and taken advantage of in 1971, 1995, and 2001 by the Democratic party. Oregon, given a few years, may sway again and have a Republican majority. I would want the Democratic party to have the this recourse if a Republican majority was in place.

If a bill or policy is so divisive that 1/3 of a state's legislature feels it necessary to deny quorum then the legislation needs work, not a vote. One third of a state is not a paltry number, in fact, in our state, it is over 1 million people. There is a reason our constitution is set up this way and it is that we are a Constitutional Democratic Republic. In a pure democracy majority rules and the minority has no say, no recourse. It always is appealing to the majority party to move closer to a pure democracy, but this paves the way for tyranny.

In these unsettled times, Oregonians need legislators to work together, not write new exclusionary rules that will end up harming Oregonians in the long run. Please oppose SJR 4.

Sincerely,

Loree Holmquist