

Dear Senators:

Kim Wallan, who is from my area, is like every representative of the Oregon House in that she was elected to do a job. When you're in the minority, that job includes showing up and trying to improve legislation you don't agree with, or voting against it. No one elected Ms. Wallan with the assumption that she simply wouldn't show up for work.

Yet that's what's happening with Ms. Wallan and her colleagues in the GOP caucus. As minority whip and as a local representative in the Medford area where I live, she has led her caucus on---how many walkouts? I can't even keep count!

This should never happen. I'm a Democrat, and believe it or not, some day Democrats will be in the minority in Oregon. I would be equally disapproving if Pam Marsh, my own house representative, or Jeff Golden, my state senator, pulled this stunt.

Last October the Mail Tribune editorial board endorsed Ms. Wallan's re-election with this caveat: "We think voters should re-elect Wallan, but if she repeats the divisive behavior of the 2020 session, they should not do so again."

But we can't wait till 2022. This has gone on long enough, and there must be consequences when legislators refuse to show up and do the work they were elected to do. Senate Bills 261 and 262, SJR3 and SJR4 appear to be a reasonable attempt to make this happen, and I support them. However, I am open to compromise. Maybe the GOP legislators can propose some reasonable amendments—but only if they show up!

Whether they do or not, delinquent legislators need to be held accountable when they violate their oath of office. Please take action on behalf of all Oregonians, many of whom are suffering from the pandemic, the wildfires, and economic hardship. Please make sure there are no more walkouts when there is critical business to be done—and ensure there are consequences for legislators who desert their jobs.

Thank you for reading this.

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