

Re: Support for HB 4002

Dear Chair Bowman and members of the House Committee on Rules,

During the last legislative session, I was overwhelmed by the number of bills I wanted to understand and take a stand on. I plead guilty to caring about a wide variety of topics that impact parts of my community and tried to follow the bills' progress as they were introduced and moved through committees.

From the perspective of a citizen advocate, I support limits on the number of bills that are introduced as proposed in HB4002. I will not address the actual numbers but do believe that the executive branch needs to continue to be able to introduce bills.

Why do I take this stand?

I remember the first time I worked with others to get a bill crafted and introduced. We did all of the preliminary work of contacting legislators, forming alliances, and finding support. The bill never had a hearing. I and others were naively shocked - when a bill is crafted, doesn't it at least have a chance to be heard? While the committee has mainly heard arguments regarding the time wasted by OLC on bills that go nowhere, my concern is the time and caring exerted by everyday Oregonians to support bills that get lost in the pile of filings.

I also frequently struggle to reconcile several bills that address much the same subject and wish there were even more cooperative work before a bill is finally crafted to integrate ideas.

Finally, in the absence of a full time and fully staffed legislature, I support the right of the executive branch to introduce bills. Our alternative is to rely increasingly on lobbyists, who represent the will of the people much less than these elected officials.

How do we amplify everyday Oregonians' voice if we limit bills?

Ideally, we need to fully staff our legislators' offices throughout the year. Staff would be available to work with advocates to craft, vet, and integrate bill concepts that could then go to OLC. They would direct advocates to other offices if a similar bill was being developed there. And they would give honest assessment of how the bill was likely to fare. This would also mean concepts would be sent through Legislative Councilors

throughout the year rather than coming in a rush just before session. I know this is unlikely in the current fiscal situation - but think it would truly create an effective bill making process that was more accessible and inclusive.

Thank you for your work on this important issue.

Carol Greenough, Ph.D.