



TO: Senators and Representatives

FROM: Senate President Peter Courtney
House Speaker Tina Kotek

DATE: November 17, 2020

RE: Legislative Staff Unionization Effort

Peter Courtney

Tina Kotek

Colleagues,

Last week we received notice from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers I.B.E.W that they were working to form a union of legislative workers. The letter (attached here for your reference) was addressed to the Legislative Administration Committee (LAC), but was sent to the Presiding Officers, Legislative Administrator, and HR Director. We have forwarded the letter on to all members of LAC and wanted to make each of you aware of the letter and offer some guidance to you in your role as an appointing authority over employees who may wish to organize.

It is not uncommon during organizing efforts for employees to discuss the organizing effort, whether they support or oppose it, amongst themselves and to inquire of management perspectives. While every employee and certainly every member is entitled to their opinion on such an effort, it is important to recognize that employees have a right to discuss these matters. It is not appropriate, and contrary to state collective bargaining laws that protect union organizing efforts, for you in your role as appointing authority to attempt to influence or interfere in any way – in support or opposition. Any organizing effort is inherently an employee driven process and at this time, there is no action for the branch or you to take. As always, we encourage you to listen to the concerns, interests and needs of your staff, but in this circumstance, you should not engage in any discussion about the organizing activity.

You may find that you have questions yourself or are asked for resources from your staff. The [Employment Relations Board](#) (ERB) has jurisdiction over certifying public employee labor organizations. Their website provides an overview of the process in Oregon and can be a place

where you can direct staff who may ask you questions as they are a neutral third party with factual information to offer.

We will keep you apprised of any developments. We remain committed, as always, to supporting the needs and interests of our amazing, dedicated legislative staff who enable us to do our work each and every day in Oregon. We know our work simply couldn't be accomplished without them. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Jessica Knieling at 503-986-1370.