

MIKE McLANE
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER
DISTRICT 55



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

November 17, 2016

The Honorable Tina Kotek
Speaker, Oregon House of Representatives
900 Court St. NE, Room 269
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Appointment of House Members to Legislative Committees

Dear Speaker Kotek:

The purpose of this letter is to express the belief of the House Republican caucus that minority parties in the Oregon House of Representatives should be granted the privilege of appointing members of their respective caucuses to the legislative committees they deem appropriate.

As you know, House Rule 8.05 currently dictates that the Presiding Officer has complete and unchecked discretion over committee assignments, including the selection of committee vice-chairs representing the minority party. The House Republican caucus views this practice as prejudicial to the autonomy of minority caucuses in our chamber and one that unnecessarily leaves the appointment process vulnerable to partisan manipulation. Further, by denying minority parties the opportunity to appoint their own committee vice-chairs, House Rule 8.05 undermines the ability of minority parties to make key strategic decisions about minority party leadership on legislative committees.

Accordingly, we respectfully request a revision of House Rule 8.05 that explicitly grants minority parties the authority to freely appoint members of their caucus to legislative committees as they see fit. Finally, I should also note that the rule change outlined above was the practice in this chamber until 1985, when Democrat Speaker Vera Katz changed it, and that minority parties in the United States Congress are afforded similar privileges. The Republican caucus believes it to be in the best interest of our legislative body, future assemblies, and the people of Oregon to restore this practice immediately.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Mike McLane
House Republican Leader
District 55 Representative