

QuickPoint! – A Failure of Political Leadership

By John A. Charles, Jr

The Oregon Senate has come to a standstill over the past several weeks. Most Republican Senators are boycotting floor sessions due to objections about both policy and process.

Media accounts have portrayed the missing Senators in a negative light, but voters should ask why the majority party has driven Republicans to such extreme measures. Democrats hold all the power, so only they can broker a compromise. They've been unwilling to do that.

One of the most basic rules of political leadership is to treat minority members with respect, because you won't always be in control. Democrats have been unwilling to do that since they became the majority party in 2013. Their abuse of power has only grown, leading to repeated walkouts by Republicans.

Last November, voters passed Measure 113, which limits legislators to 10 "unexcused absences" during a session. The punishment for going past 10 is the loss of eligibility to run for a legislative seat in the next election. Most of the Republican Senators have already missed more than 10 days.

I respect that they are willing to pay the price, but it doesn't bode well for the institution.

Reaching a compromise is possible, but the majority caucus has to play the first card.

John A. Charles, Jr. is President and CEO of Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.

May 24, 2023

Word Count: 205

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Please contact:

Cascade Policy Institute
4850 SW Scholls Ferry Rd.
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

Phone: (503) 242-0900
Fax: (503) 242-3822

www.cascadepolicy.org
info@cascadepolicy.org

4850 SW Scholls Ferry Road
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

t: 503.242.0900
f: 503.242.3822
info@cascadepolicy.org
www.cascadepolicy.org

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