



Oregon Senate Republicans

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 19, 2020

Contact: Kate Gillem

kate.gillem@oregonlegislature.gov

503-931-4529

Senate Republican Leader Statement on Oregon Employment Department Bureaucratic Failures

SALEM, Ore. – Today, through no fault of their own, hundreds of thousands of Oregonians are unemployed due to the COVID-19 virus. The bureaucratic failures of the Oregon Employment Department (OED) have hindered Oregonians from getting the unemployment benefits they were told they would receive, many waiting weeks, or on the phone for hours.

In 2009, the state received \$85.6 million from the federal government to update the OED computer systems. The OED has been audited multiple times; in [2003](#), [2012](#) by then Secretary of State Kate Brown, now Governor Brown, and [2015](#), and each time was given recommendations that the outdated computer programs be replaced.

Instead of using the over a decade of time to complete the technological upgrades, the project had just started when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. This blatant inaction by Governor Brown and OED is the source of the unemployment debacle Oregonians experience today.

Senate Republican Leader Fred Girod (R-Stayton) issued the following statement:

“Senate Republicans have received endless messages from newly-unemployed Oregonians that are suffering. They have not been given the help they were told would be available. Many have called or emailed the Oregon Employment Department hundreds of times, only to wait for an answer that doesn’t come, give up and try again for weeks on end.

“There is no excuse for this bureaucratic failure on a problem that should have been avoided with ample time and resources, and the responsibility rests with Governor Brown and the Oregon Employment Department. The people of Oregon deserve better.”

###