

WFA: The Workplace Fairness Act Written Testimony Template

Date: February 11, 2019

To: Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Knopp, Members of the Senate Committee on Workforce

From: Linda Henning

RE: Linda Henning Support for SB 726, The Oregon Workplace Fairness Act

Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Knopp and members of the Senate Workforce Committee:

I support SB 726 which would better protect workers that have faced discrimination in the workplace. I know that current laws don't go far enough to protect harassment victims at work and I support SB 726 because I have faced harassment in the workplace.

In 1974 I worked at UPS on Swan Island part-time, the night shift while attending college during the day. I was 22. The male drivers and sorters made it a practice to make comments to the young girls and at the time we just had to take it. One evening while I was in an inter-company mailroom sorting mail my manager Dennis and a couple of the drivers were gathering outside of the door. Suddenly the door closed, the lights were turned out and the driver pinned me to the counter groping and attempting to kiss me. I yelled and screamed and finally he got off of me the door opened to my manager and friends laughing. When I couldn't get any reaction from my manager I decided to quit. I left a detailed letter on the desk of one of the upper executives but I didn't hear anything back.

Workplace harassment affected every aspect of my life because I was relying on this job to support myself. When you have to go to work and face abuse, it takes away the dignity and respect that we all have the right to feel in the workplace but also takes away the dignity in supporting yourself. I simply wanted to go to work and not face harassment, so that I could put food on the table and live my life without fear.

I respectfully request the committee support SB 726 and commends Sen. Taylor and the committee for giving this legislation due consideration in service to your constituencies and Oregonians from across the state. Furthermore, I commend Vice Chair Knopp for his leadership on this issue. This bill is critical to the workplace safety of all Oregonians.