

# Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters



*Affiliated with*  
*United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America*  
25120 Pacific Highway South Suite 200, Kent, WA 98032  
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April 9, 2019

To: Senator Kathleen Taylor, Chair  
Senator Tim Knopp, Vice Chair  
Senator Jeff Golden  
Senator Bill Hansell  
Senator Laurie Monnes-Anderson

Fr: Matt Swanson, Political Director, Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters

Re: Support for Senate Bill 726

Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Knopp and members of the committee,

The Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters represents over 24,000 members working in the construction industry throughout the Northwest. We are very supportive of the efforts by the Chair and Vice Chair to address the issue of workplace harassment in Senate Bill 726. In our industry labor and management are working very hard to prevent these forms of harassment in order to ensure that everyone is welcome, productive and can perform their trade in an environment that is free from hostility and discrimination.

Senate Bill 726, the Workplace Fairness Act:

- Prevents employers from asking for nondisclosure agreements that relate to discrimination at the time of hiring, and during settlement and severance negotiations.
- Prevents employers from requesting provisions that prevent the rehiring of previously discriminated- against employees during settlement agreements.
- Extends Statute of Limitations for discrimination in employment situations to five years.
- directs BOLI to create policies and procedures for employers/employees that relate to discrimination.
- Ensures that where employers have made a good faith determination that discrimination has occurred, any severance given to the harasser, if an executive, may be rendered unenforceable.

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In the construction industry, according to an OSHA survey, 88% of women report sexual harassment at work.<sup>1</sup> A report from the Institute for Women's Policy Research noted that the problem is also persistent for many women and other protected classes in our industry,

“Yet, being treated as an equal on the job and with respect is another matter. According to the report, 31 percent of women say that sexual harassment is a constant or frequent experience at work, and 32 percent of respondents of color report frequent racial harassment and discrimination. Sexual orientation discrimination is even more common; 37 percent of respondents who identify as lesbian, gay, or transgender say that they frequently face discrimination or harassment based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. One woman states flatly, “Gender discrimination is rampant, constant, and considered normal in that industry.”<sup>2</sup>

Please support Senate Bill 726 with the dash 5 amendments.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.osha.gov/doc/accsh/haswicformal.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://iwpr.org/women-construction-metoo-building-trades/>