



Linda Sporer
Senate Committee on Judiciary and
Ballot Measure 110 implementation
February 3, 2021

Testimony In Support of SB 114 with Amendments
Linda Sporer, Private Security Professional & SEIU 49 Member

Chair Prozanski, members of the committee:

My name is Linda Sporer. I've worked in the security industry for more than 20 years. I've worked for ACSS, Wackenhut, and G4S. I've been a frontline security officer, a supervisor, training manager, patrol officer, shift lead and taken on many roles in between. I'm also a member and on the executive board of SEIU Local 49.

I'm here today because I believe DPSST needs to tapke an active role in preventing the discrimination and harassment that occur sometimes in the private security industry. Oregonians are not safe when private security officers don't have enough training to identify and prevent unlawful discrimination and harassment, and may engage in it themselves.

I've seen a lot in my time working in private security. I've had many positive experiences with my coworkers, managers, and the public. But security some employers are better than others. There are those that have honest, competent management who do their best to do right by their clients and their employees. And there are others that do not maintain a culture of respect, which has a negative impact on public safety.

I have experienced years of sexual harassment that went unchecked by private security employers. When I was a training officer and quality management representative, it was part of my job to correct coworkers' errors and give guidance on how to improve performance. I believe that some of my male coworkers could not deal with having a woman in a position of authority and that's why they openly posted pornography on the computer they knew I had to use, used explicit and lewd gestures and comments when I gave feedback, and printed a gender-based insult on the ID badge I was required to wear. No one ever said or did anything like that to male training officers.

These behaviors – and these are just a few examples - were a form of discrimination and harassment based on my gender. In some cases, managers were aware of what was going on, and did nothing to correct the situation.

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I've developed pretty thick skin over years of security experience. I kept my head down and did my job. But this has an impact on public safety.

Contract security companies often just move a harasser from one site to another. More often, they may move the person who spoke up about harassment to another worksite. That may seem like a small change, but it is not. Moving worksites can cost you dollars-an-hour in pay, hours different commute times, and a completely different work environment. That discourages private security officers from speaking up. I believe this increases the risk of security officers engaging in discrimination or harassment with members of the public. That is not keeping people safe.

This is why I support changes to SB 114 to require a new licensing program for private security entities to include a training requirement to identify and prevent discrimination and harassment. I have seen how some of my fellow union members who work as janitors have benefitted from the training requirement in that industry in the last few years. Now, people have a much clearer sense of what kind of behavior is discrimination or harassment, and they know what to do about it. This is a proven model. The same kind of training should be required of all private security providers, from executives and managers to front-line private security professionals.

Thank you.