



**Testimony in Support of HB 2461**

Submitted by Joe Baessler  
Associate Director  
Oregon AFSCME  
February 4th 2021

Chair Evans and Members of the Committee;

Oregon AFSCME supports HB 2461 and urges you to support this effort to protect Oregonians by creating a stockpile of personal protective equipment (PPE). The lack of PPE has fallen hardest on essential workers that are unable to avoid human contact. Our members have faced shortages in PPE in all aspects of our large and diverse membership. Corrections workers have been forced to move Covid positive Adults in Custody without PPE. Workers in hospital food services were given no PPE earlier in the pandemic resulting in one death that we know of. Even today medical interpreters are often forced to work without PPE in rooms where everyone else has appropriate PPE. It is a fight we have had to fight everyday since the pandemic started and we, as a state, have still failed to get a complete grasp on the problem.

We hope that nothing like this pandemic ever happens again but failure to learn the lessons it has taught us in this disaster would be unforgivable. The best way to protect essential workers in PPE. This bill will also help avoid the bidding wars that sprung up with other states for PPE and forcing workers to fend for themselves to get PPE. We believe this bill is a good step to prepare Oregon for whatever may come in the future and we thank the sponsors for not letting us forget these lessons.

Thank you and please support HB 2461

Respectfully Submitted;  
Joe Baessler  
Oregon AFSCME