



# OREGON STATE FIRE FIGHTERS COUNCIL

International Association of Fire Fighters  
AFL-CIO CLC

House Committee on Rules  
Chair House Majority Leader Smith Warner  
Vice Chair Holvey  
Vice Chair House Minority Leader Drazen

May 6, 2021

Good Afternoon Chair Smith Warner, Co-Chairs Drazen and Co-Chair Holvey,

For the record, Karl Koenig President of the Oregon State Fire Fighters Council, representing over 3500 career union fire fighters and paramedics throughout Oregon.

Our testimony is in support of SB 483A Engrossed. This Bill is to protect workers reporting health and safety concerns without the fear of real retaliation for often times following the employers written word, by reporting safety or health concerns.

This last year we have experienced too many first times in dealing with the COVID 19 pandemic. By employers humanly taking care of their employees needs and concerns without question those employers should be stood up as examples for large and small companies and employers; Unfortunately, we are faced with too many employers using fear and intimidation in an attempt to lessen the economic impact or the concern or complaint. The very reason for this Bill. Fear, intimidation and coercion is no way to promote a safe and healthy employment relationship.

SB 483A levels the employment relationship when safety and the employees' health is in question as a result of being an employee. By presuming job protection as a result of doing or performing their job, it supports an open and honest process to resolve a health or safety concern that may extend far beyond the initial safety concern or report.

As fire fighters and paramedics, we deal with the unknown every single day. We support and defend a safety culture that risks a lot to save a lot. That ethos does not work in a space wrought with fear and intimidation. We are asking for your support on Senate Bill 483A Engrossed to give Oregonians the protection they need to improve, thrive and survive while at work.

We appreciate your advocacy on this important health and safety employment protection Bill.

Respectfully,

Karl Koenig  
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