

Testimony In Support of HB2527 with Amendments
Linda Sporer, Private Security Professional & SEIU 49 Member



Chair Bynum, 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'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 some security 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 believe security companies need to take an active role in preventing the discrimination and harassment that occur sometimes in the private security industry.

I have witnessed coworkers, other private security professionals, interact with members of the public in ways that I believe were discriminatory. I also 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.

This is why I support changes to HB 2527 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.

1-800-955-3352
MAIN OFFICE

503-238-6692
FAX

3536 SE 26TH AVE
PORTLAND, OR 97202

@SEIU49
TWITTER

SEIU LOCAL 49
FACEBOOK

WWW.SEIU49.ORG