

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

Oregon Faith Movement

Board Members

The Rev. Michael Grogan
Chair

The Rev. Roberta Egli
Chair-elect

The Rev. Linda Jaramillo
Immediate Past Chair

The Rev. Paul Belz-Templeman
Treasurer

Barbara O'Hare
Secretary

The Rev. Catherine Allard
The Rev. Andrew Bansemer
Shawn Daley

The Rev. Ernestine Flemister
Charles Hudson
Alaide Ibarra

The Rev. Beverly Jackson
The Rev. Dr. Mark Knutson
The Rev. Sean Langdon
The Very Rev. Nathan LeRud
The Rev. Erika Marksbury

Patty Nance
The Rev. Cecil Prescod
Peter Sergienko
The Rev. Dr. William Sinkford
Jane Snyder
Pedro Sosa

The Rev. Dr. Rodney Page
Lifetime Member

The Rev. Andrea Cano
Interim President

Interchurch Center
245 S. Bancroft St., Ste. B
Portland, Oregon 97239

phone (503) 221-1054
fax (503) 223-7007
email emo@emoregon.org
website EMOregon.org

SB 1512: Occupational licenses should not be Denied solely due to prior conviction

February 3, 2022

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher and members of the committee,

My name is John Calhoun and I am here today on behalf of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, which urges passage of SB 1512. While I am here as a member of EMO's Public Policy Committee to communicate EMO's support for this important bill, I would like to do so by sharing a personal story.

I feel strongly about the need to pass SB 1512 because of what happened to my older brother 60 years ago. In between the Korean and Vietnam wars we still had a very active draft. My brother decided to get his military service out of the way before he got drafted. He was sent to a training camp in the south and soon developed a severe skin disease from the combination of heat, humidity, and army life. The doctors did nothing to help him and he could not handle the extreme discomfort. My brother also suffered from a certain level of autism.

The combination led him to go AWOL and he disappeared for a year. He was eventually arrested. The military gave him a dishonorable discharge, which was treated as a criminal conviction. I served as an army officer in Vietnam and I do not condone any soldier going AWOL, although today he would have been given a medical discharge.

As he tried to find his way in life, he decided to try being a mortician. He went through mortician training and discovered at the end that he was disqualified from getting a license because of his dishonorable discharge. As a mortician. What on earth reason would justify that policy other than a desire to extract a continued punishment and banishment from the rest of society?

There is no reason that he should have been prevented from getting an occupational license. There is no reason why most people who have served their sentence should be continually punished for the rest of their lives by the refusal to award occupational licenses. We are wasting lives and losing talent. What do I care if a mortician or barber once got arrested for drug possession or did something wayward when they were young like my brother?

This law should have been passed years ago. I am appreciative of this committee correcting this injustice and helping to make our society and economy a better place.

Thank you.