

OREGON TRIAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

812 SW Washington Street, #900

Portland, OR 97205

www.oregontriallawyers.org

503-799-1017

Testimony of Arthur Towers

OTLA Political Director

In Support of Senate Bill 1586

Before the Senate Committee on Labor and Business

February 3, 2022

Chair Taylor, Vice-Chairs Knopp, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 1586, which will bring the statutes into alignment with the intent of the legislature to protect workers from on-the-job harassment and the unfair use of non-disclosure agreements.

The legislature, and leaders of this committee in particular, did great work in 2019 by passing SB 726. That was landmark legislation to protect workers subjected to terrible treatment on the job who were then re-traumatized by the nature of settlement negotiations weaponized by the way NDAs were used.

In the intervening two years, our members have used the tools provided by the legislature to protect and enhance the rights of their clients – these very workers who have suffered the harassment. Our members report from the front lines of enforcement – the civil justice system -- that some unscrupulous parties have found wiggle room and escape hatches in the plain language of SB 726.

I am thrilled that we have been able to partner with you and with other advocates for the legislation to both identify the problems and tighten up the language to comport with the wishes of this body.

The legislature can and has passed tremendously important legislation on a variety of topics, and I can only imagine your frustration when implementation and enforcement go awry. SB 1586 gives you the opportunity to stand up for these victims yet again and make sure the protection you intended to provide them is actually in place.

We strongly urge you to vote YES on SB 1586.