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Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Bonham, and members of the committee,

My name is Kyndall Mason, I am with the Oregon Education Association. We represent 41,000 members who work in every aspect of our public-school systems, in the classroom and outside the classroom.

We strongly encourage your support of SB 592 to improve workplace safety and health in Oregon. Everyone deserves a safe workplace, and there should be accountability in our policies around workplace safety so that changes, if needed, are made to make workplaces safer.

SB 592 improves current safety and health practices with the goal to make all workplaces in Oregon safer. Currently, Oregon OSHA can assess a penalty when an injury or death occurs because of a serious safety and health violation like a lack of training, equipment maintenance or supervision, preventable exposure to toxins, or even lack of safety gear like harnesses or hard hats.

However, Oregon OSHA penalties for these serious violations continue to be the lowest in the nation. In 2021 the average Oregon penalty for an injury that resulted from a serious violation was just over \$600 – 5 times less than the national average. And from an inspection due to a workplace death, Oregon's average penalty was just over \$1,000 – over ten times less than the national OSHA penalty average. These low penalties mean that the worst actors can commit multiple safety and health violations before the fine is significant enough to incentivize a change in behavior.

SB 592 also strengthens inspections – which we know are also an imperative component in making workplaces safer. SB 592 would trigger a comprehensive whole-workplace inspection if three or more violations occur within a year, *or* an occupational death occurs. Currently, estimations suggest that it would take Oregon OSHA 112 years to inspect every workplace in Oregon. SB 592 ensures that when a death has occurred, a full inspection is done, checking that there are not related or separate safety and health issues that could lead to another injury or death at the same workplace.

While schools are not often thought of as a workplace, they very much are. It is important that various equipment, tools, and specialized vehicles that are being used by trained professionals, who can trust that their employer is maintaining the quality and safety of various tools, equipment, and vehicles that are required to complete their jobs.

Kyndall Mason
Public Affairs Consultant
Oregon Education Association.