



STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF SB 907

To: Chair Taylor, Senate Committee on Labor and Business
From: United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555
3/16/23

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on SB 907, which would protect a worker's right to refuse to work if there is a threat to their safety. UFCW Local 555 is the largest private sector labor union in Oregon. Our members come from a number of industries, including grocery, retail, food processing, manufacturing, and healthcare. We are a diverse group of workers who take pride in acting as a strong collective voice for working people.

We are proud to stand in solidarity with PCUN and our labor partners in supporting this vital, life-saving legislation. Workplace hazards kill an estimated 125,000 workers each year, and many of these deaths could have been prevented if workers felt they had the ability to refuse work without fear of retaliation from their employer or economic hardship.

As workers face increasing threats to safety on the job due to wildfires, extreme climate events, a deadly pandemic, and more— it is vital that we allow workers to exercise their right to protect their safety and the safety of their coworkers and customers. Our members face threats to their health due to frequent customer contact and patient care, and face threats to their safety operating heavy machinery, working outdoors, and working indoors in non-climate controlled environments.

To be clear, this bill does not create a new right, nor does it allow workers to refuse work whenever they feel like it. This bill simply clarifies that if there is a reasonable threat to worker safety, a worker has the ability to refuse to work in that unsafe environment.

SB 907 is a perfect example of how clarity in the law can have a tremendous positive impact on Oregonians. We strongly urge your support.

Madison Walters,
Political Liaison,
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UNITED FOOD & COMMERCIAL WORKERS LOCAL 555

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