



## Support Transit Workers – Support HB 3171

The converging crises of behavioral health, addiction, and homelessness that we are seeing across Oregon are also manifesting themselves on our state's transit systems. This has led to transit drivers and other frontline transit workers increasingly being harassed, assaulted, and subjected to other traumatic incidents in the course of their work.

Transit agencies offer peer support counseling to their employees to help them process these traumatic experiences, the same kind of peer support counseling that employers offer to first responders like firefighters and police. While peer support counseling for first responders is protected by confidentiality, peer support counseling for transit workers is not. **HB 3171 would simply add 'mass transit district personnel' to the categories of employees whose peer support counseling sessions are confidential.**

Transit workers provide vital service to our communities, and they have challenging jobs. They should be able to receive counseling from colleagues without fear that their supportive coworker could be compelled to testify against them. **Support HB 3171 to make it safer for transit employees to access the support they need.**

### What do the confidentiality provisions in HB 3171 do?

Currently, a transit worker who provides peer support counseling to a coworker could be subpoenaed to testify against their colleague and share information they divulged during the counseling session, e.g. to prove fault in a personal injury case. HB 3171 would make any communication during peer support counseling sessions for transit workers inadmissible in arbitration and judicial proceedings.

### Are admissions of criminal activity protected by confidentiality?

No. Any admission of criminal conduct, threats of harm, and elder or child abuse divulged during a peer counseling session is not confidential and must be reported per HB 3171.