



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Testimony in Support of SB 907

March 16, 2023

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

My name is Khanh Pham, State Representative for House District 46. Through years of community organizing and listening to community members around our state and country, I have learned that one of our deepest values as human beings is safety. Everyone deserves to feel and be safe in our communities, in their homes, and in the workplace. I am grateful to support SB 907 because Oregon workers deserve to stay safe as they carry out the demanding work that keeps our state running.

The right to a safe work environment is a basic human right, yet every year we see statistics of Oregonians who die on the job from dangerous working conditions. According to OHSU, 48 workers died on the job in Oregon in 2020. The sectors where worker deaths occur most frequently are agriculture, transportation, and construction. We rely heavily on these jobs and the workers who risk their lives to do this dangerous work. These deaths are tragic, especially because they are preventable. It's time we ensure that our community members can work safely. No worker is disposable.

SB 907 would strengthen Oregonians' existing "right to safe work" by making it easier to exercise. This bill would protect workers in a few of ways including:

- Allow workers to reasonably refuse to do work that can cause them death, serious impairment or injury.
- Give workers the right to leave or refuse to report to a worksite due to extreme natural disasters, active evacuations, and acts of criminal violence.
- Allow employers the opportunity to remove or fix the hazardous conditions or reassign a worker.
- Allow sick time, PTO, or vacation time to be used to protect a worker's pay in situations where it is too dangerous to work.
- Protect workers from retaliation under Oregon's already-established rebuttable presumption if they exercise this right in good faith and act as a reasonable person would.

SB 907 does not create a new right– nor does it give an unrestricted right for workers to refuse to work. This bill takes an existing right that is hidden in an administrative rule, and clarifies it in statute. This bill will save the lives of workers across the industries we rely on most heavily and will keep our state running smoothly.

Safety is a human right. I urge you to support SB 907 to keep Oregon workers safe.