



**Oregon**

Tina Kotek, Governor



Department of Consumer  
and Business Services

March 24, 2023

Sen. Aaron Woods, Co-Chair  
Rep. David Gomberg, Co-Chair  
Joint Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development

Re: HB 5010 testimony in support

Dear Co-chairs Woods and Gomberg:

I am pleased to share the attached testimony from a variety of workers, employers, and local small business owners who have benefitted from the division's Preferred Worker Program.

- Brandi Fogle (worker, Grants Pass)
- Cari Pickett (worker, Coos Bay)
- Linda Davis (worker, Ashland)
- Michael Dye (worker, Bend)
- Marlene Grant (employer, Newberg)
- Brian Delaney (worker, Portland)
- Stan Potocki (small business owner, Ashland)
- Aaron Hinzmann (worker, North Bend)
- Nathan Beard (small business owner, Medford)
- Scott Asbury (worker and employer, Eugene)
- Laurie Brooks (small business owner, Salem)
- Josh Urben (employer, Portland)
- Monique Norwood (worker, Portland)
- Dave Rankin (worker, Sherwood)
- Katy Williams (employer, Bend)

Sincerely,

Sally Coen  
Administrator  
Workers' Compensation Division

March 15, 2023

To whom it may concern,

Hello my name is Brandi Fogle I am a permanently partially disabled individual due to injuries resulting from work. I am writing to you about HB 5010. First of all, thank you for taking the time to read this letter. Funding for the Preferred Worker Program is of great importance, as it helps so many people that have been injured at work find and keep new jobs that they are physically and/or mentally able to do after an accident or injury has occurred on the job and helps us keep our heads held high as we are able to become productive members of our society, our community again and have purpose in our lives. That is what happened in my case, I had given up for a while, then along came a letter that the PWP could help me attain a better position with my employer, so as not to injure myself further, to be able to move up the ranks and have certain costs covered that helped myself and my employer. As I work for a small nonprofit this was huge for all parties involved. I am now managing an office in another county for them and have the tools necessary to do my job safely and feel secure.

Sincerely,

Brandi Fogle

Grants Pass, Oregon

Feel free to contact me at [brandifogle@maxmission.onmicrosoft.com](mailto:brandifogle@maxmission.onmicrosoft.com)

To Whom it May Concern,

03/09/2023

I was introduced to the PWP after a debilitating knee/back injury in 2012 where I was left unable to sit or stand for short and long periods of time, kneel, squat, or lift heavy things. Through this program I was able to get a standing desk, ergonomically appropriate desk chair, anti-fatigue mat for standing on, and with the clothing stipend, work appropriate, high-quality shoes. Of course, I would trade not being injured for a cardboard desk, but this has been a game changer in my new FT desk position as I was having to take a lot of sick time to cover not being able to sit for my full shift. This program came through for me with the necessary supports (desk, chair, mats, shoes) to help lessen the burden of my physical barriers when I was losing hope of physically ever being able to work full-time again. Working with both my Worksite Modification Consultant and who they contract through for furniture was nothing short of a great, streamlined experience where I felt my needs were taken seriously and they both excelled in taking care of them. Nothing will ever be perfect, but this program has definitely helped a lot to keep me being successful in the workforce and reassured me that I had support. Kudos to my evaluator many years ago that was able to document everything correctly for me; they deserve a million gold stars.

I ask that you support the agency's budget in HB 5010.

Thank you,

Cari Marie Pickett

Coos Bay, OR

March 13, 2023

Department of Consumer and Business Services  
Workers Compensation Division

Subject: Letter of Gratitude

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to express my gratitude for what the Preferred Worker Program has done for me and my job security. The generosity of this program has made it possible for me to stay in my job at nearly full capacity since two disabling accidents – one in 2018 and another in 2020.

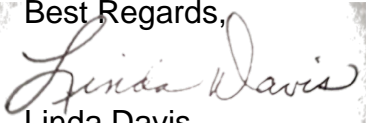
Although I walk with a limp and have not been able to train horses from the saddle since these accidents, I can do almost all of the tasks I performed before the accidents. Although I do a lot of administrative work, supervising the sanctuary facility which cares for 59 equines, is a very physically demanding job.

Having stall and barn doors slide open easily again are not only less physically demanding but the easy with which they open and close also makes it much safer when moving horses in and out of their stalls for daily turnout, grooming, vet care, hoof care, and training. The update is not only safer for myself, but for all the other employees that handle the horses.

The new feeder doors in our “long barn” allow us to feed the horses without actually going into the stalls with them limiting the risk of injury. Having updated office equipment makes the administration part of my job much easier and more efficient. The all-terrain vehicle allows access to the fields (35 acres) that would otherwise be off limits to me and cuts down on the amount of time spent on foot around the facility.

Jennifer Rice, the Work Site Consultant, has been exceptionally helpful, efficient, and easy to work with. I am positively astounded by the entire experience. I ask that you support the agency’s budget in HB 5010.

Best Regards,



Linda Davis  
Ashland, Oregon

To whom it may concern,

In regards to HB 5010- Without such a program for people who are injured on the job to start over would be next to impossible the immeasurable help that I have received. There's not enough thanks for it and I am very super grateful for this program and what they do for us workers who still need to be employed to take care of our families. Without the program it would be more of a struggle than what it is today. Thank you from the bottom of my heart

Sincerely,

Michael Dye

Bend, OR

**From:** [marlene@parrettmountaincellars.com](mailto:marlene@parrettmountaincellars.com)

**Sent:** Friday, March 17, 2023 9:48 AM

**To:** JOHNSON Christy L \* DCBS

**Subject:** Oregon Preferred Workers Program

Hi Christy

I wanted to thank the Oregon Preferred Workers Program for all the help to modify our business to help Sara Funston get back to work after her accident while on the job. The program has been helpful for all the staff and will make a difference to prevent future on the job injuries.

The whole process was so streamlined and made for fast upgrades to get Sara feeling comfortable with her permanent restrictions.

I hope that HB 5010 continues to fund to help other injured workers keep their jobs after injuries.

Best Regards

Marlene Grant  
Parrett Mountain Cellars  
503-807-4061  
Newberg, Oregon

**From:** brian delaney  
**Sent:** Friday, March 17, 2023 12:52 PM  
**To:** JOHNSON Christy L \* DCBS  
**Subject:** Re: Brian Delaney - hearing aid request

Hello Christy,

I wanted to take a moment to thank you for your immediate guidance and assistance in helping me to purchase items through the Preferred Workers program. Specific to my needs, I required comfortable shoes (since I'm continually on my feet) and most recently hearing aides, so that I can work to my fullest ability to clearly understand my co-workers and most importantly serve the public.

I was grateful to remain at my job at NEW SEASON MARKET after my injury these past few years, even as being an essential worker through COVID-19 took quite a toll physically and mentally. That your program offered financial assistance before, but more importantly today -- at a time when costs continued to climb due to inflation -- is invaluable, a welcomed relief, truly a Godsend. I enthusiastically recommend the continuation of funding HB 5010 to provide people such as myself help in their discomfort, allowing them to make their day to day work easier, gentler, kinder.

Thank you again to your company and team at Preferred Workers for all the good you do and will continue to do for others in the future with the proper funding and continued support of HB 5010.

Best,  
Brian Delaney  
Portland, Oregon

**From:** Stan Potocki  
**Sent:** Friday, March 17, 2023 12:40 PM  
**To:** JOHNSON Christy L \* DCBS  
**Subject:** Preferred Worker Program, HB5010

Hi Christy,

Could you please forward this email to me to the appropriate persons regarding HB5010.

Briefly, I would very, very highly recommend ongoing funding of the Preferred Worker Program. I work as the manager of a vocational rehabilitation company along with full time casework. I work in the "front lines" of workers comp.

My daily work involves interacting with injured workers and employers. I have assisted injured workers and employers involving use of the Preferred Worker Program countless dozens (probably hundreds) of times since the very inception of the Preferred Worker Program here in Oregon.

It is truly an absolutely invaluable resource! The program tremendously benefits both injured workers and employers and is essential in facilitating successful employment outcomes on so many cases!

The program is highly effective, responsive, and timely. Preferred Worker Program staff are extremely helpful, knowledgeable, and efficient.

I couldn't provide any higher recommendation to keep funding (or increasing funding!) for this great program! Please contact me (541-482-8888) if any additional information would be helpful.....Stan Potocki.

Ashland, Oregon



March 17, 2023

My name is Aaron Hinzmann. I was involved in a workplace accident that resulted in losing parts of 3 digits. I was unsure of my future. As time and healing progressed it became clear I wouldn't be able to return to my same job. When I became eligible for the preferred worker program I didn't fully understand what it could do to help me. This program has made it possible for me to provide for my family in a tremendous way. Because of its benefits I don't feel like a liability to my employers. Without its generous budget I wouldn't be where I'm at today. I hope stories like mine support the budget HB 5010 for the future.

Thank you

Aaron Hinzmann

North Bend, OR



03/17/2023

Dear Oregon State Legislature:

I am writing in support of Senate Bill HB 5010 which includes funding the Oregon Preferred Worker Program through the Worker's Compensation Division of DCBS.

My experience working with Oregon Preferred Worker Program employees, specifically the Reemployment Specialists, has been splendid from the start. I met PWP staff at a workshop in Klamath Falls where two of the staff members spent a generous amount of time effectively and thoroughly sharing PWP program benefit information and since that day I regularly receive referrals to assist a wide variety of Oregon PWP clients that need help returning to work. A few of the ways the PWP funding has assisted clients that I have had the good fortune to assist include relocation assistance, work/interview clothing funding, automobile repair funding, work supplies funding, work automobile fuel funding, along with interview preparation, focused job search assistance, resume portfolio creation, job application assistance, and more.

For Oregon Employers the PWP two benefits that are often utilized are the Wage Reimbursement benefit and the Worker's Compensation Insurance Premium benefit. Reimbursing up to 50% of a new employee's first six months wages and having the PWP program pay for the first 3 years of Worker's Compensation insurance premiums is a great financial benefit for any business and a great incentive for Oregon Businesses to take a chance on a job applicant, especially when they are not one-hundred percent sure of the person's abilities after being previously injured at work.

As a contracted Employment Specialist working with State of Oregon Preferred Worker clients, I can attest to the need for WCD Preferred Worker funding to assist people with injuries, limitations, and setbacks in returning to work and/or finding paths to new careers. Over the past four years I have worked with over 50 Preferred Worker Clients providing Job Search Skills Assistance and Job Placement and Retention services. Well over 70% of these clients obtain new jobs and successfully begin their path in a new career.

Thank You,

Nathan Beard

Medford, OR

Employment Specialist

(541) 200-7057



ATTN: To Whom it May Concern

March 20, 2023

Department of Consumer Business Services (DCBS)  
Preferred Worker Program (PWP)  
Workers' Compensation Division (WCD)  
350 Winter St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301-3879

Re: Advocate for Oregon's Preferred Workers Program

Dear Legislators,

I'm writing this letter as an advocate for the state of Oregon's Preferred Workers Program (PWP) and HB 5010. As an injured worker for Eugene School District, I understand first hand getting injured on the job can and has been a life changing experience. Though I do not have permanent impairment and have been released to full duty after being on work restrictions, my back will never be the same. Through the Employer at Injury Program (EAIP), I was able to access benefits and obtain ergonomic equipment/tools to address my work limitations. I was also able obtain wage subsidy reimbursement through my claim. This experience paved the way for me to embrace and support the PWP.

As Risk Coordinator, I have managed the district's workers' compensation program for 12 years. During this period, 4J has collaborated with the state's PWP in accessing these benefits for 10 employees. These employees include: 2 Custodians, 2 Nutrition Services Staff, 2 Educational Assistants, 1 Bus driver, 1 HVAC Technician, 1 Locksmith, and 1 Teacher. After each of these employees became PWP eligible, I met with the supervisor, explained the process, benefits, and recommended the district proceed with the PWP process.

When meeting with supervisors advocating for the PWP here is what I share with them: Obtained tools/equipment/work site modification comes at no cost to the district. These items in many cases helps the employee over-come their work restrictions, some of which does the pushing, pulling, lifting, lowering for the preferred worker. A huge benefit to this is that other employees can use these tools/equipment to. And obtained items become district property Just from the HVAC Technician, 4J has ordered \$7,049.22 worth of equipment/tools. Also, the PWP motivates employers to retain their injured workers as employees. Rehiring a new employee is an investment in time, money, and resources. Lastly, accessing wage subsidy reimbursement enable the district to be able to use this money for a variety of safety initiatives.

The PWP plays a critical piece in returning an injured worker back to the job at injury, preferably. Being able to obtain ergonomic tools/equipments at no cost to an employer, truly is an incentive to return an injured worker back to work. Without state funding, employers will be less motivated to return employees back to work when they have permanent impairment that may impede their ability to perform the essential functions of their job.

Scott Asbury

Risk Management and School Safety  
Eugene School District, 4J  
200 North Monroe Street  
Eugene, OR 97402  
541-790-7673  
asbury\_s@4j.lane.edu



March 19, 2023

Department of Consumer Business Services  
Preferred Worker Program (PWP)  
Workers' Compensation Division  
350 Winter St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301-3879

Dear Legislators,

I am writing this letter in support of the State of Oregon Preferred Worker Program and HB 5010. As the state's assistive technology program, we have been afforded the opportunity to work alongside the PWP in identifying and providing workplace accommodations to assist injured workers as they return to gainful employment. Whether it's the individuals who are now able to complete their computer tasks by voice, or the employees who are able to work a full 40-hour work week because they have been provided ergonomic furniture that allows them to work with reduced physical stress, without the support of the PWP, each and every one of these individuals would be sitting on the sidelines. Instead, because of the services available through the PWP, these individuals are once again contributing members of their household and community.

Please continue to find the Oregon Preferred Worker Program a funding priority.

Thank you,  
Laurie Brooks

*Specialists in Ergonomic and Assistive Technology*

2225 Lancaster Dr. NE • Salem, OR 97305 • 1 800 677-7512 • V/TTY: 503-361-1201  
www.accesstechnologiesinc.org info@accesstechnologiesinc.org  
Fax: 503-370-4530

Department of Consumer Business Service  
Preferred Worker Program  
350 Winter Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Legislators,

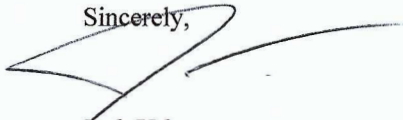
I am writing this letter in support of putting people back to work through the preferred worker program. The premise of the program is very different than a lot of other Government Funding. Instead of asking for a hand out, this is a group of people that just want to get back to work to become productive members of society. Funding goes to their employer to make adjustments in the work place vs just providing a never ending monthly hand out.

Reasons To Maintain Funding.

- 1) Putting people back to work provides purpose for those individuals.
- 2) Having employment not only creates a stronger society, it is therapeutic for the individual who is back to work. Often just getting back in the work force changes the mindset of a previously injured worker allowing them to grow and progress.
- 3) This is a pro-business program that is non discriminatory. Very often our government programs favor big businesses and certain groups of people. This Program helps any company that would like to put any person back to work.
- 4) With employment of one preferred worker, the state/fed saves money on an on going basis for years to come on workers comp payouts, social security, food and housing assistance, and food stamps.
- 5) Putting people back to work also has the unintended result of curbing drug and alcohol addiction, domestic disturbances and homelessness.
- 6) Putting parents back to work creates stronger families. Marriages are stronger and usually parents with purpose provide a better example to their children and the generations to come.
- 7) In most cases these employers have health insurance, which relieves the state of health insurance costs.

We are poised to significantly spend far more money dealing with our homeless issues in the state. In the majority of cases, homeless issues will be an going costs year after year after year. The preferred worker program is a program with an end result that puts people back to work who truly want to work. It creates a stronger society and gives purpose to people. In managing our homeless issues we should be consulting the preferred worker program designers to create the same successful results. Giving people positive purpose through employment just works.

Sincerely,



Josh Urben  
Territory Manager  
Small Business Owner and Landlord  
Portland, OR

**From:** Norwood, Monique N :LSO Employee Health  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 4:36 PM  
**To:** TACADENA Zoe B \* DCBS  
**Subject:** Preferred Worker Program

In regards to HB 5010- Initially, I didn't know how to feel about the program because I felt like it was a stigma attached to me. I have been depressed after having loss my ability to return to work after my injury. It was not my fault, yet I was left with the impact and the permanent loss of function. I was scared and worried daily if I was going to just must collect social security sand would I qualify.

After numerous conversations with the specialist and consultant I finally was comfortable. I was able to understand my benefits better, they were very patient and informative. I felt like I had an advocate on my side. Especially after attending the educational session, you hosted. The preferred worker program has been invaluable to me. It has given me a sense of peace and reassurance despite having a permanent disability. The incentives that are provided to the employer I think are a strong asset to the program that makes a worker a more attractive candidate for them. I am sure I have spent money on this that were benefits that I could have received but do not worry now I am able to access them and want to use them to the maximum benefit.

What I have learned through the program I have taken back to my employer and hope to be a help to other employees that can feel the same sense of pride with the program. The designation of a preferred worker makes me want to strive to do the best that I can at work because they are taking a chance on me, and I get a chance to share my skills regardless of my limitations. I am grateful for Zoe and Jennifer they have provided.

**Monique Norwood** RN, BSN, EMPA  
Employee Health RN | Employee Health  
1919 NW Lovejoy St., Portland, OR 97209  
**P:** 503-414-5651 | **E:** [mncarter@lhs.org](mailto:mncarter@lhs.org)



**From:** Dave Rankin

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:41:42 AM

**To:** BREITBACH Caitlin S \* DCBS

**Subject:** Re: Preferred worker program

When I first received my Preferred Worker program qualification in the mail, I didn't know what it was and I sat that piece of mail aside for a couple of weeks... When I circled back around to it I called the number and was pleasantly surprised by not only the offerings of this program but also the incredible customer service I received. After a long battle of dealing with a workers comp injury, I finally felt as though someone cared about my injury. Caitlin Breibach's empathy and caring demeanor was fantastic and made me feel comfortable and supported. The Preferred Worker program has given me the tools I need to do my job comfortably every day whether I'm working from home or in the office. I don't know what I would have done without this program and its offerings. I sincerely suggest this program receives any needed funding in order to help support the budget for this program ( HB 5010). It's an amazing program and I believe it will greatly impact those who are injured and need financial support as well as the ability to get the things needed to reenter the workforce comfortably.

Sincerely,

Dave Rankin

Sherwood, OR



**Mailing address:**  
64682 Cook Ave #99  
Bend, Oregon 97703

Office (541) 330-1930  
Bookkeeping (541) 330-1930  
Fax (541) 317-1465

jw@quicksilvercontracting.com  
jamie@quicksilvercontracting.com  
katy@quicksilvercontracting.com

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ATTN: To Whom it May Concern

March 23, 2023

Department of Consumer Business Services (DCBS)  
Preferred Worker Program (PWP)  
Workers' Compensation Division (WCD)  
350 Winter St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301-3879

Re: Successful Oregon Work Story

Dear Legislatures,

I am writing this letter in support of the Preferred Worker Program (PWP) with the State of Oregon and House Bill 5010.

Quicksilver Contracting is a full-service forest services company in Bend, Oregon, with a dual commitment to restoring forest health and bringing sustainable wood products to market. The bulk of our operations are based in the woods and employee hours are weather and market dependent.

In the past year, we have had the experience of working with the PWP for two employees who each have over 40 years of experience truck driving. Each employee had prior workplace injuries that made it impossible to work during the winter, due to needing to be physically able to apply chains to their truck in a moments notice. In addition, other employees would assist the workers daily in covering their chip vans with tarps. Through partnership with the PWP, each employee was able to customize their tractor trailers with enhanced steps, grips, automatic-chain, and automatic-tarp systems. The employees also received adapted tools, such as handheld grease guns, clothing, and items specific to assist their injuries.

Not only did the program allow these employees to work through the winter months and provide a consistent income to their families, but the program also gave those employees back their independence and sense of dignity in the workplace. They no longer had to rely on other employees to cover and strap their chip vans with tarps or be afraid they may encounter unexpected road conditions that left them feeling helpless and needing to call for assistance.





**Mailing address:**  
64682 Cook Ave #99  
Bend, Oregon 97703

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Fax (541) 317-1465

jw@quicksilvercontracting.com  
jamie@quicksilvercontracting.com  
katy@quicksilvercontracting.com

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As an employer, the modifications provided through PWP improved productivity by having these two employees be able to provide some of their own maintenance to the vehicles they drive and the ability to work year-round by utilizing auto-tarps and auto-chains with the press of a button. The program covered these modifications worth tens of thousands of dollars, which we immensely appreciate with these continuing years of extreme volatility in markets and workplace shortages. Specifically, this program allowed us as employers to keep experienced truck drivers working as we are navigating a nationwide truck driver shortage. We have also received numerous calls from other truck driving companies asking about the program through word of mouth and how they may qualify for adaptations to their truck to help keep drivers on the road.

Overall, we have enjoyed working with and appreciated the options available through the PWP to our employees and they have been so grateful with the modifications. The vendors we have worked with for the modifications have voiced appreciation through the partnership and the ability to learn about the program. The program has a clear structure which made it easy to work together to get modifications completed.

We look forward to working with the program in the future if/when we have employees that have had prior workplace injuries and that could benefit from modifications that allowed them to be more comfortable, continue working, enhanced safety measures, and creating a greater sense of independence and higher moral in the workplace.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thanks,

Katy Williams  
64682 COOK AVE. #99  
BEND, OREGON 97703  
P: 541-330-1930  
F: 541-317-1465  
<https://quicksilvercontracting.com/>