



## Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council

January 28, 2025

Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Bonham, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in **opposition of SB 748, which would allow the Department of Employment to drug test applicants for receipt of benefits.**

My name is Alberto Gallegos and I am providing written testimony on behalf of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Oregon. SEIU Oregon is composed of SEIU Local 503 and SEIU Local 49, which together represent over 85,000 people. Local 49 represents private sector janitors, property service workers, light manufacturing, and healthcare workers; while Local 503 represents homecare workers, private nonprofit workers, in-home childcare providers, nursing home workers, and state and local government employees.

This policy would cause far more harm than good. Losing a job is already one of the most challenging experiences someone can face. Adding barriers to accessing social benefits could push individuals into homelessness, addiction, and worsening mental health crises.

Furthermore, drug testing often lacks evidence to justify its implementation and has the potential to be used as a targeted and discriminatory practice. Denying unemployment benefits to someone fired for drug use creates a harmful cycle, making it harder for individuals to recover and reenter the workforce. Requiring drug testing for workers who later secure a job that already includes such testing is redundant and unnecessary.

It is also worth noting that many workplaces do not require employees to perform dangerous tasks, making mandatory drug testing an impractical and counterproductive practice. Additionally, collecting sensitive medical information raises serious concerns about HIPAA compliance and the secure storage of personal data.

Unemployment benefits exist to support people in times of need, not to create additional obstacles. If someone loses their job due to drug use, they need access to support and treatment—not punishment. In a state facing ongoing homelessness and addiction crises, the solution lies in providing treatment and assistance, not withholding vital services.

SEIU Oregon strongly urges this committee to oppose SB 748.

Thank you,

Alberto Gallegos  
Political and Government Relations Organizer  
SEIU Oregon State Council