



Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council

January 30, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in **opposition to SB 481**.

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.

SB 481 prioritizes corporate interests over workers' financial well-being by exempting earned wage access (EWA) products from state lending laws while failing to include critical worker protections. If passed, it would be a direct threat to the financial security of workers across Oregon, paving the way for predatory lending practices that perpetuate the cycle of poverty and disproportionately prey on low-wage workers, including many SEIU members who serve our communities every day.

In recent years, we have heard horror stories from workers who had been caught in payday lending schemes. In many instances, their employers would have an agreement with similar lenders and would “incentivize” workers into using the lender by claiming that they were giving their workers the ability to be paid daily. Workers caught in these schemes would soon realize that they were being gouged with daily fees and other charges—like “expedite” fees—which resulted in workers paying to be paid.

Fortunately, Oregon has made significant progress in protecting workers from payday loan abuses, but this bill threatens to undo that progress by allowing payday loans under a different name. Oregon must stand firm against predatory lending practices and ensure that any financial products marketed to workers are truly in their best interest—not just another way for lenders to profit at their expense.

SEIU Oregon urges this committee to stand with workers—not predatory lenders—and oppose SB 481.

Thank you,

Alberto Gallegos
Political and Government Relations Organizer
SEIU Oregon State Council