



Disability
Rights
Oregon

TO: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards
FROM: Disability Rights Oregon
DATE: February 10, 2024
RE: HB 2957 Support

Chair Graybar, Vice Chair-Elmer, and Vice Chair-Munoz,

My name is Ben Gurewitz, and I am here on behalf of Disability Rights Oregon. We appreciate Representative Nelson for bringing forward HB 2957, a critical step toward ensuring fairness and equity in workplace discrimination and harassment claims.

Under current law, the statute of limitations for workplace discrimination and harassment claims is five years. However, if a worker files a claim with the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) because they believe they have experienced any form of discrimination—including sexual harassment or racial discrimination—their statute of limitations is automatically reduced to just **90 days** after BOLI issues a finding. This inconsistency in the law is arbitrary, unfair, and places an undue burden on workers seeking justice. HB 2957 would fix this disparity by ensuring that all workers—regardless of whether they go through BOLI or pursue legal action independently—retain the full five-year statute of limitations.

This issue is especially critical for people with disabilities, who are disproportionately impacted by workplace discrimination. According to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), in 2021, individuals with disabilities accounted for **37.8% of all workplace discrimination and harassment charges**, despite making up only about **13% of the population**¹. This alarming overrepresentation highlights the urgent need to remove unnecessary barriers that prevent workers from seeking justice.

HB 2957 provides a straightforward solution: it ensures that anyone who experiences workplace harassment or discrimination has the time they need to process their experience and take appropriate legal action. No worker should be forced into an unjustly shortened timeline simply because they sought assistance from BOLI.

¹ U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. (2023, January 9). EEOC releases annual performance report for fiscal year 2022. EEOC. <https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-releases-annual-performance-report-fiscal-year-2022>

I urge your support for HB 2957 to bring fairness, consistency, and dignity to Oregon's workplace protections.

About Disability Rights Oregon

Since 1977 Disability Rights Oregon has been the State's Protection and Advocacy System.² We are authorized by Congress to protect, advocate, and enforce the rights of people with disabilities under the U.S. Constitution and Federal and State laws, investigate abuse and neglect of people with disabilities, and "pursue administrative, legal, and other appropriate remedies".³ We are also mandated to "educate policymakers" on matters related to people with disabilities.⁴

If you have any questions regarding DRO's position on this legislation, please call Ben Gurewitz at 971-806-7908 or email him at bgurewit@droregon.org.

² See ORS 192.517.

³ See 42 U.S.C. § 15041 et seq; 42 U.S.C. § 10801 et seq.

⁴ See 42 U.S. Code § 15043(a)(2)(L).