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# A STRONG VOICE FOR OREGON'S WORKERS

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TO: Chair Grayber  
Vice-chairs Muñoz and Elmer  
Members of the Labor and Workplace Standards Committee  
FR: Catie Theisen, Oregon AFL-CIO  
RE: HB 2957 Support

February 10, 2025

The Oregon AFL-CIO represents 300,000 workers across Oregon and is a voice for all workers in the legislative process. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2957.

The goal of HB 2957 is to fix an inconsistency in the current law regarding the statute of limitations to file workplace discrimination and harassment claims. Right now, workers have a five-year statute of limitations to file these kinds of claims.

However, if a worker turns to the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) for help—whether for sexual harassment, racial discrimination, or any other form of workplace injustice—their time to take legal action is unfairly slashed to just 90 days after BOLI issues a finding, regardless of how much time would have been left in the 5 years.

In current practice, BOLI issues both a determination (where they find substantial evidence of discrimination, or not) and a Right to Sue notice, telling workers they have 90 days to file in court. This letter can be confusing and overwhelming to workers who are going through something extremely stressful. Adding a short time-line to an already stressful situation greatly increases the pressure on workers navigating a foreign and opaque system.

Adding to this burden are the very limited legal options for Spanish speakers. There is a lower barrier to filing with BOLI than there is to finding a Spanish speaking lawyer who wants to take your lower-dollar value claim. Many workers then file there, without knowing that they are likely cutting their time to file in court, (their “statute of limitations” or SOL,) down by up to 4 years. At the end of the process, even if BOLI finds evidence of discrimination, the letter you receive tells you that you have only 90 days to file in court, a very short amount of time for a busy law office to decide to take a case, work it up and file it.

This arbitrary and unjust discrepancy creates an unfair disadvantage for workers, discouraging them from seeking support and making it harder to hold employers accountable.

HB 2957 is a common-sense solution that protects workers' rights, holds employers accountable, and ensures that every worker has the time they need to seek justice. It ensures that all workers, regardless of whether they go through BOLI or pursue independent legal action, retain the full five-year statute of limitations. No worker should be punished with a shorter timeline simply for seeking help.