

# RABBI FORA

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February 12, 2025

Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: SB 957

Esteemed Members, Vice Chairs, and Chair of the Committee,

My name is Rabbi Forest Alexander, or Fora. Many of you know me from my work around the state as an organizer. I am also someone who has been personally effected by non-competes. My first profession was in theater. In Houston, the market is largely community theaters and small companies. And the use of non-competes is a nearly standard.

My mentors opened a performing arts center that operated for many years called Slightly Off Center Players in Deer Park, Texas. When the 2009 market crash occurred. our budget took a large hit. They were forced to close the theater. We searched for a while to find our next gig. Due to non-competes that had been previously signed by the owners, her options were limited. This forced us to travel 30 miles, just over the 25 mile limit stipulated, to find work. At first, the commute was somewhat bearable. But after about 2 years, we all moved.

This is just one small example that doesn't have the same impact as what we're discussing today. If a healthcare provider is forced to make this same decision, an entire community could lose out on care. Suppose the podiatrist or obstetrician, strangled by non-compete language, is unable to continue providing care in her community.

This is additionally complicated given providers work for different healthcare systems or are in-network for different insurers. This is common precisely because there may not be enough patients in a given specialty to support a practice. So, only by providing for multiple insured pools is a provider able to generate enough income.

While non-competes may have originally been intended to protect access to certain skillsets, they have become a cudgel used by employers to indefinitely control a worker. Because if one leaves an employer, how is it that employer can still dictate their choices? That seems deeply counter to our shared values of personal freedom, economic prosperity, and free markets.

I urge you all to support this bill. Thank you.

-Rabbi Fora

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## CONTACT