

February 19, 2025

**No on House Bill 3140**

House Committee on Economic Development, Small Business and Trade

**Testimony of Joseph and Liza Dawes, Richland, WA**

Chair Nguyen and members of the Committee, my name is Joseph Dawes. I am an officer in the United States Armed Forces, currently serving my 17<sup>th</sup> year. My wife Liza and I wanted to be there with you in person today, but Liza is still in a nursing room, fighting to recover from life altering injuries. The reason we are here today is because of the careless and negligent act of a snowplow driver up at Timberline, who ran over Liza from behind, twice, in the small parking lot outside of the day lodge.

My wife and I are both active, outdoor enthusiasts and we were excited to get up early on Sunday, January 5<sup>th</sup> to head up to Timberline for a two-day ski retreat. We took a few runs, and then went back to the car for a break.

(Liza Dawes) I was in the parking lot corridor, less than 20 feet from the day lodge when I felt something hit me from behind. I was suddenly face down under the snow and under the weight of the snowplow tire. I could hear my bones breaking. The snowplow stopped, but then reversed and ran over me a second time. I started screaming. The pain was so bad and I could hardly move. People came and flipped me over, but I couldn't talk or feel my arms. It was the scariest moment of my life.

(Joseph Dawes) I heard my wife screaming and I ran to her. By this time, that huge, industrial grade John Deere snowplow had already backed over my wife a 2<sup>nd</sup> time. We waited for an ambulance to make the drive all the way back to Legacy Emmanuel in Portland. I drove behind not knowing if she'd live. Liza was in ICU for 33 hrs. where the doctors and nurses were just trying to stabilize her – nothing could be done until her extreme swelling went down. On Jan. 9<sup>th</sup> she went in for surgery. Her pelvis was crushed which required surgery, and 2 main arteries were bruised. My wife had fractures to her left leg and foot, and a torn kneecap socket. She was on oxygen for a couple of weeks because her liver was lacerated and her lung collapsed.

(Liza Dawes) I have spinal cord injuries, and my right shoulder down to my wrist is still numb. I still cannot walk! I still can't move my knee and might need another surgery in the summer. I'm only 25 and I'm taking my protein, but my body resources are so weakened.

(Joseph Dawes) I am a GS at Hanford and we are proud to have a 100% safety culture. We start every day with a safety 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. I worked at Home Depot in college and even there we had spotters, with flags, anytime we were using loading equipment and in an area with pedestrians.

This was a high pedestrian traffic area! The snowplow driver was driving blind, with his full bucket of snow blocking his vision of pedestrians.....including my wife. There were skiers and snowboards and people walking everywhere. If this would not have happened to my wife, it could have easily happened to someone else. There were no flags, there was no back-up beep or warning, there was no supervision. And my wife could have died because of their negligence. It's just good business practice to do whatever you need to do to keep your customers safe. Liza still has a long road ahead of her and if this bill passes, Timberline gets a free pass and my family suffers immeasurably. What will motivate them to prevent this from happening again if they're not held accountable?

We both urge you to **Vote No on House Bill 3140**. Thank you.