



TO: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards
FROM: Ben Gurewitz
DATE: March 3, 2025
RE: HB 2742 Support

Dear Chair Graybar, Vice-Chair Elmer and Vice-Chair Munoz, and members of the House Committee

My name is Ben Gurewitz, and I am testifying on behalf of Disability Rights Oregon in strong support of House Bill 2742. Disability Rights Oregon is the state's Protection and Advocacy System, authorized by Congress to protect, advocate for, and enforce the rights of people with disabilities.

The Center for Research on Disability estimates that there are 660,000 people with disabilities in Oregon, of whom 181,000 are employed. This means that 27.5% of Oregonians with disabilities are employed. Compared to other states, 27 has a smaller proportion of people with disabilities employed, while 24 have a larger proportion.

House Bill 2163 represents a significant step in expanding employment opportunities for people with disabilities, particularly through three key provisions:

1. Directing the Bureau of Labor and Industries to provide clear guidance to employers and establish low- or no-cost mediation services to resolve disputes about reasonable accommodations.
2. Prohibiting the use of unnecessary physical requirements in job postings and ensuring union representation in discussions about accommodations.
3. Requiring state agencies and contractors to include outreach, recruitment, and retention of people with disabilities in affirmative action plans.

Disability Rights Oregon has worked with several clients who were screened out of job opportunities due to unnecessary work requirements. One example is an individual employed at a grocery store who was recently placed on leave because their disability prevented them from fulfilling a 50-pound weight requirement. While this person rarely needs to lift 50 pounds, and can ask a colleague for assistance, when necessary, the requirement does not reflect the actual demands of their job. As a cashier, their ability to lift a specific amount of weight does not impact their ability to perform their work. However, such requirements can unfairly limit access to employment. HB 2742 would take a significant step forward in increasing opportunities for people with disabilities to attain and sustain their employment and we urge your support.

About Disability Rights Oregon

Since 1977 Disability Rights Oregon has been the State's Protection and Advocacy System.¹ 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".² We are also mandated to "educate policymakers" on matters related to people with disabilities.³

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

¹ See ORS 192.517.

² See 42 U.S.C. § 15041 et seq; 42 U.S.C. § 10801 et seq.

³ See 42 U.S. Code § 15043(a)(2)(L).