



*Testimony in support of SB 705 (2025)*

Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Bonham, and members of the Committee,

My name is Kate Suisman. I am an attorney at the Northwest Workers' Justice Project (NWJP). Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important bill. We represent workers in low-wage jobs when bad things happen to them at work: when they are not paid, or are discriminated against for being in a protected class or are retaliated against for speaking up. Finally, we engage in policy advocacy and try to bring the important perspectives of workers in low-wage jobs and immigrant workers to these policy discussions.

We represent many injured workers when they face retaliation after a workplace injury and file a workers' compensation claim. Because all of our clients are in low-wage jobs, many are already living paycheck to paycheck. Because the wage replacement during the workers' compensation process is two-thirds of your average weekly wage, many of our clients have a difficult time paying for necessities during this time. When a worker is already dealing with a workplace physical injury, they should not have the added stress of figuring out how to get by on 2/3 of their usual income.

We have seen many cases where workers try to go back to work before they are healed, only to reinjure themselves. But the economic pressure on many workers is great under the current system.

Workers should be able to meet their basic needs while they are receiving treatment and recovering from their work-related injuries. An increase to 80% of wages for those making the average weekly wage as proposed in the -2 amendment will help support workers when they need it most. Please support SB 705.

Thank you for your attention on this issue.

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