

From the Desk of Dr. April Milan
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Dear Chair Taylor and Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Business,

My name is April Milan, and I am a union healthcare provider with the Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals (OFNHP) AFT 5017. I am writing to express my strong support for SB 968, which sets fair limitations on how far back an employer can reclaim wages they claim were overpaid.

As someone dedicated to healthcare, I have seen how financial instability affects workers and their families. Currently, Oregon law allows employers to demand repayment of supposed overpayments without restriction, even years after the wages were earned. This places an undue burden on workers, many of whom have accepted job offers based on the wages they were assured at the time.

At my place of work, numerous employees have been blindsided by sudden demands to repay significant amounts due to payroll errors made by the employer. In some cases, these repayment demands have reached tens of thousands of dollars, creating financial hardship and emotional distress for workers who relied on their paychecks being accurate from the start.

SB 968 proposes two crucial safeguards: it limits the timeframe for wage recoupment to 90 days, aligning Oregon with Washington's policy, and prevents employers from deducting more than 5% of an employee's gross pay per pay period to recover overpayments. Employees who choose to pay back at a higher rate would still have the option to do so.

This bill is an essential step toward fair labor protections and extends these protections to public employees. Some have expressed concerns that SB 968 could make it more difficult for small businesses to address payroll errors in a timely manner. However, the bill does not eliminate an employer's ability to recover funds—it only ensures that workers are not unfairly penalized for errors outside of their control.

Oregon workers deserve fair and transparent wage practices. Employers should be held accountable for maintaining accurate payroll records rather than shifting the burden onto employees. SB 968 allows for necessary corrections while preventing undue hardship on workers.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB 968 and support a more just approach to payroll corrections.

Sincerely,

April Milan, DPT, PCS, CSCS, Union Healthcare Provider, OFNHP AFT 5017