

Submitter: D Torres
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2957
Chair & Committee Members,

I oppose HB 2957.

This bill would prohibit employers and employees from mutually agreeing to modify or limit the statute of limitations for claims falling under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI). Such agreements, when entered into voluntarily and with consideration, are a common and lawful feature of contracts that help bring certainty, predictability, and timely resolution to employment disputes.

By eliminating this option, the bill removes an important tool for employers and employees alike to resolve issues quickly and avoid protracted litigation. This could result in an increase in stale claims, higher legal costs, and greater uncertainty for all parties involved. Employers could face significant challenges maintaining documentation and evidence years after an alleged incident, which hampers the ability to fairly adjudicate claims.

Additionally, while the bill does clarify timelines for BOLI's issuance of notices and the filing of civil actions, these provisions do not fully offset the increased legal exposure created by the prohibition on negotiated statute of limitations. Employers may be deterred from early settlement efforts if they perceive that the resolution process remains open-ended and lacks finality.

Further, designating a violation of this prohibition as an unlawful employment practice is a significant and punitive step. It transforms a contractual term—often agreed upon in good faith—into a source of liability in itself. This could have a chilling effect on standard employment practices and complicate compliance efforts even for well-meaning businesses.

While protecting workers is an essential priority, this bill may create unnecessary burdens on employers and lead to longer, more adversarial dispute processes. A more balanced approach would preserve the right to enter into reasonable agreements while ensuring transparency and informed consent from employees.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to reconsider or revise this legislation before moving it forward.