



May 6, 2025

To: Senate Committee on Labor and Business Oregon State Legislature

From: Beaverton Area Chamber of Commerce

Re: Opposition to House Bill 2957-A

Dear Representatives, Chotzen, Fragala, Gamba, Munoz,

On behalf of the Beaverton Area Chamber of Commerce (BACC) with 618 members and more than 6000 businesses in Beaverton, I write today to express our strong opposition to **HB 2957**, a bill that poses significant risks to Oregon's employers—particularly small businesses—by drastically altering the process for addressing workplace discrimination claims.

Under current law, employers are afforded some level of legal clarity following a Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) investigation. If BOLI finds insufficient evidence of discrimination, the complainant has a 90-day window to pursue litigation. However, HB 2957 would allow plaintiffs' attorneys to file with BOLI, utilize state investigative resources, and then delay private lawsuits for years—even if BOLI found no basis for legal action. This undermines the very purpose of the BOLI process and places undue, prolonged burdens on employers.

Key concerns with HB 2957 include:

- **Prolonged legal exposure:** Employers would be left vulnerable to litigation for up to five years, even after having successfully defended a BOLI claim. This uncertainty forces businesses to retain legal counsel indefinitely and keep records and witnesses on hand for years.
- **Misuse of public resources:** The bill effectively turns BOLI into a discovery tool for trial lawyers, allowing them to leverage taxpayer-funded investigations to support future lawsuits.
- **Discrepancy with federal standards:** HB 2957 deviates from the more efficient timelines used by federal agencies like the EEOC, creating confusion and inefficiency.
- **Harm to small businesses:** Unlike large corporations, small employers often lack the legal and financial capacity to endure extended litigation. A single claim—even if meritless—can cost more than \$75,000 to settle. This bill dramatically increases the financial strain on Oregon's entrepreneurs.
- **Overly broad scope:** The 5-year statute of limitations would apply to a wide range of protected classes and claims, expanding the window for litigation across nearly every area of employment law.



- **Conflict with Oregon's existing laws:** Oregon has already passed the Workplace Fairness Act, which imposes strict limits on nondisclosure agreements and settlements. HB 2957 further complicates the resolution process, discouraging timely and amicable settlements.

We urge you to consider the serious consequences this bill would have for Oregon's business community. By extending liability timelines and encouraging unnecessary litigation, HB 2957 undermines the goal of prompt and fair resolution for all parties. We respectfully ask you to oppose this bill and advocate for policies that balance employee protections with the realities faced by employers—especially small businesses that form the backbone of our state's economy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Alicia M. Bermes, IOM, MA
President/CEO Beaverton Area Chamber of Commerce