

Submitter: Jacob Brown
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Commerce and General Government
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1593

Dear Senators,

I am submitting this testimony in support of measured liability reform in Oregon. Participating in the outdoor industry as both a client and guide has been one of the most formative experiences of my life. In college I truly matured leading my peers in the mountains and river canyons that make the US west coast what it is. I also watched as fear of litigation turned my beloved college outdoor program from one fostering independence, growth and responsibility into one valuing canned, adventure-free, over-priced outdoor trips. Fear of litigation has kept me from starting my own outdoor outfitting business. As an avid rafter and former commercial river guide, I have acquired enough experience and equipment to start a business renting equipment and preparing meals and camp services for other boaters. However, when I looked into filing the paperwork and opening shop, I realized there was effectively no way to indemnify our personal assets from litigious persons. We thus put the brakes on that plan.

Touching grass, rivers, and rocks is among the best experiences a human can have. He should be free to exercise his own judgement and participate as he sees fit. Currently it is only the largest scale operators who can possibly spread out the risk of one angry injured person claiming damages. Small operators, and prospective ones like myself, cannot accept that risk. We either close shop, don't open shop, or live in perpetual fear of that one little misstep, often completely out of their control, that will end everything.

Please stand up to the wealthy trial lawyers. Stand up for normal Oregonians and bring a bit of sense back to our liability laws.