

Submitter: Dianna Risley  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Rules  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1517

Opposition Testimony to SB 1517A  
Submitted by: Dianna Risley  
Oregon Small Business Owner and Recreational Participant

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dianna Risley. I am a small business owner in Oregon and operate a 24-hour fitness facility serving over a thousand members in my community. I am also an active participant in many of the recreational activities that make Oregon such a special place to live, including fitness training, outdoor recreation, and organized events.

I respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to SB 1517A as currently written.

Waivers are not about avoiding responsibility. They are about clarity. They ensure that adults who voluntarily participate in inherently risky activities understand and acknowledge those risks. Whether someone is lifting weights, hiking, cycling, skiing, rafting, or participating in youth sports, risk cannot be fully eliminated. Waivers help preserve access to those activities by creating reasonable boundaries of responsibility.

SB 1517A, while appearing to allow waivers, undermines them by listing 28 broad exceptions under which they would not be enforced. This creates legal uncertainty and exposes small businesses, nonprofits, youth programs, and recreational providers to increased liability. The practical result will not be greater safety. It will be higher insurance costs, fewer offerings, and in some cases, closures. Small, locally owned businesses like mine do not have the margins to absorb expanded and unpredictable liability.

As both a business owner and a participant, I value personal responsibility. Adults should be able to choose to engage in activities knowing there is risk involved. Reasonable, clearly written waivers are a longstanding and essential tool that make recreation accessible across Oregon.

I strongly support amendments A-11 or A-15, which would convert this bill into something that allows waivers to be reasonably and consistently enforced. Without those amendments, SB 1517A will create confusion, increase litigation, and harm the very communities it claims to protect.

Oregon thrives because of its vibrant recreational economy and the small businesses that support it. Please oppose SB 1517A in its current form and support amendments that preserve balanced, enforceable waiver protections.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,  
Dianna Risley  
Oregon Small Business Owner