

HEALTH & FITNESS ASSOCIATION

March 2, 2026

The Honorable Ben Bowman
Chair, House Rules Committee
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Health & Fitness Association Written Testimony Regarding SB 1517A

Dear Chair Bowman and Members of the House Rules Committee:

On behalf of the Health and Fitness Association which represents more than 800 fitness facilities in Oregon, I am writing to you to express our opposition to SB 1517A in its current form.

For over a decade, the fitness and recreation industry has sought a common-sense solution to Oregon's broken liability waiver system. Oregon needs a framework that allows Oregonians to take personal responsibility for their recreational choices. Unfortunately, SB 1517A is not that solution. In fact, it would be better to have no bill at all than to enact SB 1517A.

This legislation is ineffective and harmful because it creates a "fix" in name only. Legal analysis confirms that SB 1517A provides at least 28 specific loopholes that litigants can use to nullify a waiver, making the protections effectively meaningless. This does not provide the clarity businesses need; it provides an invitation to further litigation.

Furthermore, as *The Oregonian* Editorial Board noted on March 1, 2026, this bill shifts all the risk of an individual's choices onto the business and levies an "unreasonable expectation of perfection." This is an impossible standard for any fitness provider to meet. By failing to provide clear, enforceable standards, SB 1517A makes Oregon an unattractive market for insurance carriers, which will lead to fewer policy options and even higher premiums for business owners already struggling with rising costs.

The fitness industry provides a vital public service by improving the physical and mental health of our citizens. We cannot continue to do so if we are exposed to unlimited liability for non-gross negligence.

We respectfully request that you oppose SB 1517A and instead adopt the -11 or -15 amendments. These amendments offer the simple, effective restoration of reasonable

liability waiver enforceability that our industry and the broader recreation coalition desperately need. It is time for the Legislature to act, but we must act correctly to ensure these community businesses can survive.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Regnante
Manager of Government Affairs
Health & Fitness Association