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Dear House Business and Labor Committee Member –

MEASURE: SB 1548
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SUBMITTED BY: staff

Please send SB 1548 to the House Floor.

SB 1548 would stop the practice of posting help-wanted ads that preclude the already-unemployed from applying. It is a simple bill that still gives businesses the flexibility to hire the right person – whether or not they've been previously unemployed – while ending a practice that has real, negative effects.

SB 1548 is not an attempt to limit a business's hiring flexibility. In fact, many states are considering bills that go much further in their protections for unemployed workers. This bill is the middle ground.

What SB 1548 does is address two major hurdles we face in helping the unemployed: the long-term unemployment rate, and the need to apply for jobs to receive Unemployment Insurance benefits.

Oregon's unemployment rate has begun to decrease. Businesses are creating jobs, albeit not enough. Our cyclical unemployment rate is coming back down, as indicated by first-time claim rates and length of new unemployment claims. But long-term unemployment is still extremely high. In fact, earlier this month Ben Bernanke announced that nationally over 40% of the unemployed are considered long-term unemployed – far higher than average. These are the people we must help get back to work. But if their resume isn't even accepted because of their employment status they don't stand a chance.

To make matters worse, to qualify for unemployment insurance benefits, workers must be actively applying for jobs. But when some jobs are closed off to them from the start it can be difficult for unemployed workers in some industries to apply for enough jobs in their field.

SB 1548 is a small, simple, help for the Oregon workers who are struggling the most in our recovering economy. It won't hurt, reduce flexibility for, or tie the hands of Oregon businesses, and it will show the long-term unemployed that we are doing what we can to help their families get back on their feet.

Please pass SB 1548 to the House floor, and tell unemployed Oregonians that your committee is doing what it can to help.