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Please Vote Yes on HB 2069
Testimony of Chris Frost
Portland, Oregon
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Chair Beyer and members of the Business and Transportation committee, I am an attorney who has represented injured workers for 20 years. I am writing today on behalf of the Oregon Trial Lawyers Association (OTLA) in support of HB 2069. This bill is a fix to an unintended drafting error from legislation that was passed in the 2009 session. In trying to streamline an administrative process, the statute (ORS 656.340(12)) was inadvertently changed to limit wage-replacement benefits to workers who qualified for longer vocational programs. This has been a real hardship for the workers who were qualified to receive longer vocational programs but were unable to access wage-replacement benefits because of this statute change.

With this legislative correction, these same workers will again be able to access lengthier training, allowing them to likely re-enter the workforce with a wage closer to what they were making when their work injury caused their inability to return to their former job. This is in keeping with the objective of the Workers' Compensation Law to restore the injured worker physically and economically to a self-sufficient status in an expeditious manner and to the greatest extent practicable. (ORS 656.012(2)(c)).

We appreciate the efforts of WCD and MLAC to correct this problem for injured workers and the vocational counselors who shepherded this bill through this session. Please support HB 2069.