

MEASURE: HB 2672  
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**Date: April 8, 2013**

**To: Chairperson Doherty and members of the House Business and Labor Committee**

**From: Laurie Bisby**

**PROTECT DOMESTIC WORKERS, YES ON HB 2672!**

Chairperson Doherty and members of the Committee, I am Laurie Bisby, an advocate and shelter manager at Saving Grace, a non-profit that provides support and services to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

I would like to tell you about an individual I met through my work at the Saving Grace shelter. I encountered Cyndy when she fled from an abusive employer and sought refuge in our shelter. Cyndy was a foreigner, brought here as a domestic servant by a wealthy American who owned a home in Central Oregon. For years, Cyndy's employer subjected her to verbal, physical and sexual abuse, exploiting her economic vulnerabilities and holding her passport to prevent her from leaving. Cyndy worked long hours, often having to get up throughout the night to prepare snacks as the family demanded. She never received overtime and rarely had time off. Her employer screamed at her, commanding her to obey his every demand. He punched her in the face when she dared to disagree with him. If he pointed his finger to a corner - she learned to obediently obey and go to that corner, where she would have to sit while he poured water on her. Other times he punched her in the chest and strangled her. One occasion, he knocked her head against a wall so hard that she wet herself.

On a regular basis, he withheld her minimal pay until she submitted to his sexual demands. Other times, he just forced himself on her sexually while forcing her to watch pornography. When he left her at home alone, he would take what little money she had and kept her passport under lock and key, so she would have no avenue for leaving. On several occasions, he locked her in her room to prevent her escape. This was nothing less than slavery.

Cyndy was able to find the strength and courage to leave this abusive employer after he slashed her forehead with a box cutter and smothered her with a pillow. She got help and we at Saving Grace provided her with shelter and connected her with the service she needed to escape her abuser.

Had HB 2672 been in place when all of this was happening, Cyndy and other like her would have been protected from this type of abuse. HB 2672 would have required her employer to provide her with a written schedule of work, regular and overtime pay, regular pay days, sick leave and holidays. She would have been given at least 24 hours off each week with 8 uninterrupted hours of sleep every night. Her employer would be required to track her work hours and be subject to review by the Bureau of Labor, just like other employers. It would have prohibited her employer from holding her hostage by confiscating her passport, from sexually assaulting her and making submission to sexual assaults a condition of her employment.

**Please pass HB 2672 to ensure all domestic workers are protected in the future.**

