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Re: Support for House Bill 2449

Dear Senator:

I am an Assistant Attorney General and have worked in the General Counsel Division of the Department of Justice for the past thirteen years. I am the contact attorney for the Bureau of Labor and Industries, Oregon Mortuary and Cemetery Board, Board of Naturopathic Medicine, and Occupational Therapy Licensing Board. I am one of four Assistant Attorneys General that provide legal services to the Public Utility Commission. None of these agencies, nor any state agency, deserves to suffer a reduction of legal services if the Assistant Attorneys General engage in a strike or a work slow-down.

Administrative law is a unique practice area, and it often involves complex substantive legal issues. More importantly, many state agencies take administrative action to protect the public safety. For example, a health licensing board that I represent may issue an emergency suspension order because a licensee is abusing his or her drug prescribing authority, has an impairment that affects his or her ability to practice safely, or abuses a patient. Such orders must be promptly issued and defended if a contested case is requested. I provide essential services to that end.

For these reasons, I urge you to support House Bill 2449. Assistant Attorneys General should be strike-barred so that we can remain on the job, protecting the public safety. In my division, that means providing supporting legal services to other state agencies essential to public safety. Any labor disputes that may arise can still be dealt with fairly in the future, through binding arbitration, if House Bill 2449 is enacted. Please support this bill.

Thank you,

/s/

Johanna M. Riemenschneider
Treasurer, Oregon Association of Justice Attorneys