



Associated Oregon Industries

# AOI TESTIMONY ON HB 2700 BEFORE THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

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## AOI opposes HB 2700.

Since 1973, Oregon law has included an important protection for Oregon businesses against potentially abusive class action processes. House Bill 2700 would make Oregon a less desirable place for businesses by diminishing these protections and making it easier for class action plaintiffs to obtain large damage awards against companies.

AOI represents roughly 1500 businesses in Oregon, and those businesses provide almost 200,000 jobs to workers across the state. All of those companies need a stable, dependable legal environment in order to run their businesses and continue to provide jobs.

Unfortunately, HB 2700 would seriously erode the stability of Oregon's legal system by disposing of the well-established rules by which damages in class actions are determined, and applying new rules retroactively to cases that have already been tried and verdict rendered.

Imposing such retroactive procedural changes is fundamentally unfair to all parties – plaintiffs and defendants alike – who have been litigating their cases according to the procedural rules that Oregon has followed for decades.

Defendants have made settlement decisions, determined strategy, won and lost motions based on Oregon's rules. Changing the rules in the middle of the game seriously destabilizes Oregon's legal system. And it sends a terrible message to business.

Current class action protections for business have been in place in Oregon for 40 years. AOI does not believe there is any justification for applying new rules of civil procedure to cases that are already in process, or have been tried to verdict.