

Testimony in support of HB 2542

Respectfully Submitted by Joe Baessler, Political director Oregon AFSCME

Chair Holvey and members of the Committee, my name is Joe Baessler and I work for Oregon AFSCME. We represent over 24,000 workers in the state of Oregon. Our interest in HB 2542 is fairly simple we support all workers getting the benefits that they have earned. In the vast majority of our contracts it is already written in that accrued vacation will be paid out once you leave your job for whatever reason. For the most part this bill will not impact our members but it is an important issue that needs to be addressed

To AFSCME this is an issue of fundamental fairness but also one of property rights. The accrued vacation is not a gift to employees. Vacation hours are the same as earned wages that are deferred for use as vacation at some point. When you leave a job you are entitled to the wages you earned until that point. Workers are entitled to the vacation time they have earned until the time they leave their job. This vacation time is not a gift it was part of the agreement made between employers and employees as part of their overall compensation. If the employer withholds that money when an employee leaves their position then it is the same as keeping earned wages. The fact that it is legal to withhold this earned benefit under current law strikes my organization as sanctioned theft. HB 2542 will just make it clear that you get or keep what you have earned. Please support HB 2542