

Testimony in Support for SB 552

Respectfully Submitted by Joe Baessler, Political Director for Oregon AFSCME

Chair Dembrow, Members of the Workforce Committee my name is Joe Baessler and I work for Oregon AFSCME. Oregon AFSCME represents over 24,000 workers in the state of Oregon and while this legislation does not touch on any of our members directly it is important to protect workers throughout the state. We support SB 552 and support the domestic workers around the state of Oregon. These workers often work in a hidden economy within the homes of others and out of the sight of the normal safeguard of employment. Their workplaces are not offices or factories and they don't have the Bureau of Labor and Industry rules posted on the wall. There is often no other co-worker to lean on for support. We at AFSCME believe that this is a situation that could easily be abused. We think that SB 552 sets up fair and sensible rules to protect the workers in this industry.

The bill makes sure that workers get in writing the basics of their employment every year. These employment expectations in writing are essential to establish the boundaries of an employer/employee relationship. Those relationships are often blurred already as the work is in the home of the employer. Mandates on overtime and rest periods are not extravagant request. SB 552 allows domestic staff to prepare their own meals and have three personal days every year. The bill also protects these workers from unwanted sexual advances and makes it clear the employer cannot hold on to the employee's passport. There is also basic protection from discrimination. We support these rules for all workers regardless of their work place.

We believe that the rules outlined in this bill are essential to protect workers. These rules should not be onerous on the employers and we feel they are common sense and should be the kind of things all employers do if they are legitimate and fair. We ask that the committee support the bill. Thank you for your time.