



April 6, 2015

Chair Michael Dembrow  
Senate Committee on Workforce  
900 Court St. - State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Dembrow and members of the Committee:

My name is Stacy Cowan with the Service Employees International Union, Local 503 and I am here today to testify in support of SB 845.

SEIU Local 503 represents 55,000 Oregonians doing more than 500 different jobs in 85 state, local government and non-profit agencies and care facilities.

The services we provide include helping deaf people get access to education, testing new drivers, collecting revenue, securing contracts and purchase orders, helping veterans, assisting at-risk youth, repairing bridges, maintaining Oregon's parks and caring for children, seniors, and people with disabilities — just to name a few.

Our union has a vision of a just society where everyone is treated with respect and dignity and where workers are able to provide for themselves and their families.

We, like the majority of Oregonians believe in the dignity of work. We believe that people who work for a living deserve the dignity of being able to support themselves without the need for public assistance to put food on the table, to care for their children or to keep their family healthy.

However, Oregon has one of the highest percentage of workers receiving assistance. The impact of working, particularly working full time or cobbling together enough part-time jobs to get 40 or more hours a week, and not being able to be self-sufficient is demoralizing and discouraging.

SB 845 is a simple accountability measure to ensure that large employers are providing adequate healthcare benefits to their workers as required by the ACA, and that the state is recouping costs for medical assistance programs for workers that are receiving these benefits when their employer refuses to provide them.

We support this bill as a basic fairness issue. When employers refuse to provide healthcare benefits employees must turn to public assistance to make ends meet we all pay. We pay through our taxes. Precious public resources that could be invested in improving our education system and

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investing in other parts of the Oregon infrastructure are instead spent to subsidize profits of low wage employers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.