



April 20, 2015

Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair  
Senate Committee on Workforce  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Dembrow and Members of the Senate Committee on Workforce:

I am writing to express Basic Rights Oregon's strong opposition to SB 814, a bill intended to take authority away from cities and counties to go beyond state regulations in the area of employment benefits.

I serve as the Co-Director for Basic Rights Oregon, a statewide advocacy organization for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and allied communities. We represent tens of thousands of Oregonians from every corner of this state. Like the Oregon legislature, Basic Rights Oregon has heard loudly and clearly from our constituents outside of Portland, particularly in rural communities, that they are being left behind-- left behind in this economic recovery and left behind in experiencing full equality.

SB 814 is overly broad and unnecessarily jeopardizes protections for workers, including historic civil rights protections as well as agreements designed to ensure parity and equity in public contracting.

During the last two decades, Basic Rights Oregon has worked closely with local communities to develop civil rights legislation that has been critical to laying the groundwork for statewide LGBTQ protections. Having a state law that overrides these protections would have the unintended consequence of setting back this path to justice for many people in Oregon, because local communities have often led the way in adopting new public policies that protect workers and residents, long before the state or federal government considers action. This bill would foreclose the opportunity for that to happen again in the area of employment benefits.

Local communities should retain the ability to require employment benefits that are demanded by residents who live there. It recognizes that different parts of the state may want to confer different benefits. The State of Oregon should respect local priorities, and not intrude on that level of local governance.

I strongly encourage you to Vote No on SB 814.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeana Frazzini". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeana Frazzini  
Co-Director, Basic Rights Oregon