
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon

February 4, 2016

Members of the Senate Workforce and General Government Committee:

As the state's leading political voice for women's health care, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon is proud to be a part of the Fair Shot for All coalition, which is making important advancements to ensure that women and working families have a level playing field to achieve success.

At Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon, we know that women's health and economic well-being go hand in hand. More than a third of female voters have struggled to afford prescription birth control at some point in their lives and, as a result, used birth control inconsistently. Women make up nearly two-thirds of minimum-wage workers and for every dollar men earned in 2012, Oregon women earned 79 cents – and black and Hispanic women earned even less on average. The ability to plan, prevent and space pregnancies is directly linked to benefits to women, men, children and society, including more educational and economic opportunities, healthier babies, more stable families and a reduced taxpayer burden.

That's why we are writing to thank you for your consideration of SB 1587 to stop wage theft in Oregon. SB 1587 paves the way for Oregon to be a national leader in enforcing wage laws, protecting workers and collecting unpaid wages, and it builds a foundation for comprehensive wage theft reform in 2017.

Stopping wage theft gives workers the pay they deserve. Workers can be sure they're paid what they're owed – and they aren't cheated out of the opportunity to provide for our families. SB 1587 helps workers know the rules. It's easier to stand up to dishonest employers when workers understand the law. When we know we are protected from retaliation, workers will be more likely to speak out about this abusive practice without fear of losing our jobs.

By holding dishonest employers accountable, we can crack down on illegal employment practices and curb the race to the bottom that results in the loss of good jobs in the market overall. SB 1587 strengthens enforcement and accountability and provides state agencies with additional tools and resources to enforce existing wage and hour laws and hold excessive and intentional offenders accountable. We are glad to see a limited private right of action included in this bill and believe that it is an essential part of the solution to wage theft. This levels the playing field and alleviates pressure on honest employers to find other ways to cut costs and strengthens our economy.

Sincerely,



Mary Nolan
Executive Director