

OREGON TRIAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

319 SW Washington Street, #607

Portland, OR 97204

www.oregontriallawyers.org

503-799-1017

**Testimony in Support of HB 2856
Before the House Business and Labor Committee
Arthur Towers
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Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on this important issue. Our members fight for workers who have not received all the wages they are due for their work. We also represent workers who face other unfair treatment on the job.

Our goal here is to reduce the amount of unfair treatment workers have to endure. To give you a sense of how there has been bi-partisan efforts to do so in the past, I want to update you on the impact of a bill many committee members voted for in 2015 – HB 3816 -- a workers' comp bill that received 55-4 support. As many of you remember, that bill forced insurance companies to pay workers' legal bills for the hours that the insurance company interviewed the workers trying to find fraud in their injury claims. The happy result is that many of these interviews now last less than 30 minutes instead of multiple hours. Lawyers aren't getting a lot more business from this. Instead workers who are legitimately injured no longer have to go through the wringer with the insurance industry.

Many of you have voted to protect workers because you believe it is the right thing to do. But, it makes no sense to vote for worker protections if the workers you are fighting for can never enjoy the fruits of your labor. You get no credit from the opponents of these bills for passing a version with weaker enforcement. It makes more sense to pass a version that can be properly enforced and give workers the protection that they deserve and that you intend for them to receive.

Finally, employers enjoy the private right of action and full protection for a number of violations that workers commit. This is not a comprehensive list, but instead a sampling of statutes, that when violated by an employee, can result in a private civil case by an employer and their lawyers:

Breach of fiduciary duty
Fraud
Intentional Interference with business relations
Non-compete clauses
Confidentiality and Trade Secrets

The enforcement provisions of HB 2856 are not at all unreasonable and simply parallel the rights employers already enjoy. We urge a YES vote on HB 2856.