

March 17, 2017

RE: LC 3084-Preventing Discrimination through Public Contracting

Dear Representative Lininger,

On behalf of Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc., I want to offer our support of (HB 3060) Preventing Discrimination through Public Contracting. Jobsite harassment leads to decreased safety and productivity, high turnover rates, and a loss of profit for employers. We believe this legislative concept will protect our most vulnerable workers and send a clear message that Oregon stands for equitable and fair treatment in public contracting.

Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. (OTI) is dedicated to promoting success for women in the trades through education, leadership, and mentorship. Since 1989, OTI has trained and educated more than 1,100 diverse, low-income women for high-wage construction trades career opportunities through our pre-apprenticeship program. On average, 31% of our students are women of color. Last year, OTI's nationally recognized, state-certified pre-apprenticeship program graduated 80 women and placed 88 women into secure jobs in the construction trades. About one-third of Oregon's female apprentices are graduates of Oregon Tradeswomen's pre-apprenticeship and manufacturing program.

The legislation proposed via HB 3060 would allow OTI's graduates and all diverse workers across the state of Oregon to have protection from general harassment, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and discrimination. Nationally and in Oregon, industry struggles to retain diverse workers in the construction trades. This issue has shown up, over and over again, in studies of apprentice retention. Apprentices across the spectrum of the population consistently report harassment and abusive behaviors on their worksites, although diverse women and men of color experience higher rates of these behaviors. The gender and racial disparity in our construction industry will continue until we take concrete steps to create an environment where our diverse workforce can thrive. HB 3060 is a beneficial step to promote safety, economic opportunity, and equity in workforce and contracting.

Oregon Tradeswomen Inc. wholeheartedly supports House Bill 3060 for Preventing Discrimination through Public Contracting.

Sincerely,

Emma Brennan
Workforce Project Manager
Oregon Tradeswomen Inc.