



March 20, 2017

Chair Paul Holvey
House Committee on Business and Labor
900 Court St. - State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee:

Good afternoon. My name is Stacy Cowan and I am with SEIU Local 503. SEIU has 65,000 members in the state of Oregon and SEIU members work both in the public and the private sector. SEIU 49 has over 400 workers who work in large manufacturing plants, and thousands of workers who work for large multi-national companies, and we strongly support House Bill 2567.

Working families in Oregon are living in increasingly precarious conditions and a sudden layoff can come as a particularly hard blow. When work disappears, that can mean a family is unable to cover the cost of basics, like housing, food, clothing and health care. People experiencing homelessness in Oregon often report that a layoff put them on the streets.ⁱ These mass layoffs can also have devastating effects on local communities. When hundreds of workers in a given area are laid off the impact to our local school, county and city budgets is also felt.

HB 2567 would require employers over a certain size to give their employees 60 days' notice before a mass layoff. Having 60 days to prepare for such a dramatic life change would mean families would have time to transition. The bill also requires notification to other state agencies that could help workers to re-train for new skills or look for new employment. The notice given to workers would allow them time to look for new work and make some of the difficult adjustments that many people have to make after a layoff.

HB 2567 includes two exceptions that would allow employers room to maneuver, making this bill reasonable for both the employee and the employer. First, seasonal and project-based jobs are exempt from the 60-day notice requirement. This bill would not affect employees are hired with the knowledge that their employment is temporary. Secondly, a company actively seeking capital or business that would maintain its workforce would not be required to give the 60-day notice. This would allow companies to continue pursuing deals with clients or lenders who might be dissuaded by news of impending layoffs.

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In contrast, companies that are not actively seeking to maintain their operations owe it to their employees to give them a reasonable period of time to prepare for being out of work.

Thank you I'm happy to answer any questions.

ⁱ Frost, Allison. "Portland Homeless Couple Striving For A Scaled Down American Dream," September 20, 2016. <http://www.opb.org/radio/programs/thinkoutloud/segment/american-dream-portland-homeless/>.

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Willis, Chris. "More than 1,200 Homeless Veterans Home at Last." *KGW*, February 16, 2017. <http://www.kgw.com/news/local/homeless/more-than-1200-homeless-veterans-home-at-last/409128335>.