

May 9, 2017

Representative Paul Holvey, Chair
House Committee on Business and Labor
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the over 825 City of Portland employees represented by the Professional and Technical Employees Local 17, I write today in support of Senate Bill 1040.

Unions have played a vital role in raising the standard of living and workplace safety for Oregonians. For many blue collar jobs, unions have made the difference between unsafe, unsecure work and stable family-wage employment. We believe that the passage of SB 1040 necessary to defend Oregon workers' ability to freely organize for common purpose in the workplace. It would maintain the status quo that has protected this ability in Oregon for over 80 years.

Restrictive "right-to-work" laws have been used as deceptive anti-union tactics in other parts of the country for decades, and proponents of such laws have increased activity in Oregon during the past three years. It has been shown repeatedly that these laws lead to lower workplace safety, lower worker wages, and higher rates of poverty amongst children. Oregon has defended against such laws in the past, and our workers continue to benefit from their ability to organize without undue restriction. SB 1040 will help maintain the important rights of workers to organize, leading to better outcomes for working families across the state.

Moreover, SB 1040 would prevent a patchwork of differing worker protection standards from spreading across the state. Such a situation would be detrimental to both workers and employers, as companies would be forced to struggle with significant differences in policies between jurisdictions. In the modern economy where businesses may have operations in many areas of Oregon, statewide regulation of this element of labor policy will provide important consistency.

As a public sector labor union, PTE Local 17 is not directly impacted by SB 1040. However, we believe that all working Oregonian families benefit from strong worker protections, and the ability to freely organize is vital amongst these. We believe that such freedoms are a key part of what makes Oregon what it is today, and SB 1040 will assure that such freedoms will exist into the future.

Sincerely,



Elliot Levin
Research Director and Legislative Advocate
Professional and Technical Employees Local 17

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