



PORTLAND WINTERHAWKS



WESTERN HOCKEY LEAGUE

Vote Yes on SB 901A

- Proposed legislative changes would continue current understanding and practice that Oregon employment laws do not apply to amateur athletes (like those playing for the Portland Winterhawks) as they train and develop in Oregon. The Portland Winterhawks are members of the Western Hockey League (WHL). The WHL has 22 teams, 17 in Canada, 4 in Washington, and the Portland Winterhawks in Oregon.
- Proposed changes bring Oregon wage and hour statutes in line with Oregon worker's compensation statutes that already provide that these amateur athletes are not "employees."
- Workers' compensation exemption for amateur athletes is updated to recognize that amateur athletes may come from countries other than the United States and Canada. Also, recognizes that players registered with national and state bodies governing amateur sports (like USA Hockey) are considered amateur athletes as opposed to employees.
- SB 901A was introduced in response to litigation filed in Canada alleging that hockey players including those playing for the Portland Winterhawks and other WHL players should be considered employees.
- The Washington legislature enacted similar changes to clarify WHL players are amateur athletes in 2015 in SB 5893 (Senate vote was 47-1, House vote was 91-7). Canadian provinces of British Columbia, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia adopted similar provisions to their employment laws/standards.
- SB 901A passed out of the Senate Rules Committee on a unanimous 5-0 vote.

From the Desk of
Senator Ted Ferrioli