



February 12, 2019

Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Knopp, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 726. SEIU Local 503 represents over 74,000 people who provide valuable services to our communities, doing more than 500 different jobs in 85 state, local government and non-profit agencies and care facilities.

SEIU Local 503 has committed to be a leader in the ongoing conversation around workplace harassment and discrimination. Our union has identified our Safe Workplace Initiative - which protects the rights and dignity of all workers - as a priority for our work in the legislature this year. It is our shared belief that workplace harassment is unacceptable, and that we must work to ensure that every workplace is healthy, safe, inclusive, and respectful.

An internal survey of our membership from early 2018 revealed that of the 1,106 workers who took the survey, 232 reported experiencing unwanted sexual attention in the workplace, and 260 reported working with someone who had experienced sexual assault. Of the 232 workers who reported experiencing harassment themselves, 190 self-identified as women - or approximately 81.9% of those responding.

These results, while only a sample of the workers we represent, make a strong case for the need for proactive reforms like SB 726. We know that current laws don't go far enough to protect harassment and discrimination victims at work and that women are disproportionately victims of harassment and discrimination. 82% of EEOC charges were filed by women. Women of color are even more disproportionately victims, filing 56% of the claims while only making up 37% of the workforce and black women specifically are three times more likely to file a claim of harassment or discrimination than their white counterparts. By having BOLI create standards and procedures for employers and employees regarding sexual harassment, we will begin to create an environment where all women in Oregon can work with dignity and respect.

On behalf of our members, I want to thank the committee and the sponsors of Senate Bill 726 for giving this legislation due consideration in service to your constituencies and Oregonians from across the state.

Thank you,

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