



February 27, 2019

TO: Representative Jeff Barker, Chair
House Committee on Business and Labor
FR: Bob Joondeph, Executive Director
RE: Support for HB 3022

Disability Rights Oregon (DRO) is the *Protection and Advocacy* office for Oregon, providing legal-based advocacy services to Oregonians with disabilities across the state. DRO supports HB 3022.

DRO does not advocate for or represent clients in workers compensation matters. However, as an organization that advocates for the civil and human rights of all Oregonians with disabilities, we work toward a world in which discrimination based upon disability is a thing of the past.

The unemployment rate for people with disabilities who are ready and able to work persistently hovers at twice that for nondisabled individuals. Overcoming this disparity requires the elimination of discrimination in the workplace in areas of hiring, wages, benefits, separation, working conditions and social insurance.

An individual who is born with, for example, cerebral palsy who has a slip and fall injury on the job should not be treated differently from a nondisabled worker who suffers the same accident. This is why DRO supports the exclusion from the definition of a “preexisting condition” of human characteristics that are “immutable.” Workers should not receive less protection due to their characteristics, such as a developmental disability, that are inherent.

We believe that HB 3022, by modifying the understanding of “preexisting condition”, will result in a fairer job market for workers with disabilities. We urge your passage of HB 3022.