

OREGON TRIAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

812 SW Washington St, Suite 900

Portland, OR 97205

www.oregontriallawyers.org

503-467-8324

Testimony of Jake Hessel
In Support of SB 823
Before the
Senate Committee on Health Care
March 20, 2019

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 823. Members of the Oregon Trial Lawyers Association fight for worker safety and patient safety. This is an important piece of legislation that will help in both of those areas. Workplace violence is a serious issue. Reporting workplace violence is an important response to a dangerous situation and no worker who does so should ever be retaliated against for making their report.

OTLA members commonly fight for whistleblowers who are facing retaliation. Retaliation and workplace culture against whistleblowers can often contribute to a hostile work environment as a potential wrongdoer feels there will be no response to workplace harassment, discrimination and in this case, assault. Unchecked hostile actions within a workplace will lead to a more dangerous workplace for everyone involved.

Another important provision to this legislation is the recordkeeping requirement. When detailed records are maintained of assaults committed against employees, it can allow deeper-rooted issues to be addressed by health care providers and eventually create a safer work environment moving forward.

We thank the committee for their work on this important issue. To promote increased workplace safety and patient safety, the Oregon Trial Lawyers Association encourages your support of SB 823.