

Testimony in Support of the Oregon Corporate Accountability Act, SB 750
Senate Committee on Workforce
April 4, 2019

My name is Maura Escobar. I worked cleaning offices for National Maintenance Contractors. I paid them more than \$10,000 for what they called a franchise, but was really just a job cleaning offices for them. They never gave me as much work as they promised, or paid me the money they promised for the work I did and there was extra money being taken out of my pay. Then they tried to charge me even more money to renew my contract with them. When I objected, they refused to even let me transfer the contract to anyone else or otherwise refund any of the money I had paid them.

Desperate and with no money to pay the extra fees, I spoke to a lawyer who told me that I was actually probably an employee of NMC and they had been misclassifying me and calling me a franchise owner or independent contractor to avoid paying me and avoid their other responsibilities to me as an employer. But I had signed a lot of papers with them, including the franchise agreement and an arbitration agreement that will make my case very complicated to fight. I signed those papers in English, with no real understanding of what they said and only my young daughter there to help translate for me. I know I shouldn't have signed them but I needed to work and I was promised I would make lots of money running my own business.

I want to stop companies like this from abusing workers. That is why I support SB 750. I believe it will give workers a way to hold companies accountable. Thank you for your time.

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*Mi nombre es Maura Escobar. Yo trabajé limpiando oficinas para National Maintenance Contractors. Pague más de \$10,000 por lo que ellos le llamaban franquicia, aunque verdaderamente solo trabajaba limpiando oficinas. Nunca cumplieron con sus promesas sobre la cantidad de dinero que iba recibir mensualmente, ni la cantidad de trabajos, y me sacaban dinero extra de mi cheque. También trataron de cobrarme más dinero para renovar mi contrato con ellos. Les comente que no estaba de acuerdo y que quería vender mi franquicia. Ellos no me dejaron venderla y negaron devolverme el dinero que les había pagado.*

*Desesperada y sin dinero para pagar el dinero extra que me pedían, hable con un abogado que me dijo que era probable que yo era una empleada de NMC y que me habían clasificado incorrectamente como dueña de franquicia o contratista independiente para no tener que cumplir con sus responsabilidades como empleador. Desafortunadamente yo firme muchos papeles con ellos, incluyendo el contrato de franquicia que contenía un acuerdo de arbitraje que complica mi caso demasiado. Firme esos papel en Ingles sin entender su significado y solamente mi hija joven me pudo ayudar a traducir el contrato. Ahora entiendo que no los hubiera firmado pero necesitaba trabajar y me sonaba bien la promesa que yo iba tener la oportunidad de tener mi propio negocio y ganar mucho dinero.*

*No quiero que vuelva suceder este abuso de trabajadores por empresas. Por eso apoyo SB 750. Creo que dará a los trabajadores, como yo, una manera de hacer responsables a los empresarios. Gracias por su tiempo.*