
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon

May 9, 2019

Chair Williamson, Vice-Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

As the state's leading political voice for reproductive health care, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon (PPAO) urges strong support for SB 726A, the Oregon Workplace Fairness Act, which modernizes statutes that govern discrimination in the workplace. PPAO believes that every person has a right to bodily autonomy and should have the power and resources necessary to make decisions about their bodies, health and future. Economic security is an integral part of personal empowerment. Workplace discrimination and harassment violate an individual's right to bodily autonomy; undercut their agency; devalue their dignity; and directly compromise their ability to achieve and maintain economic security by creating an unsafe work environment. The Oregon Workplace Fairness Act, SB 726A, proposes sensible and much-needed changes that will protect victims of harassment and hold those who harass and discriminate accountable.

At least 1 in 4 women have been sexually harassed at work.¹ Women are the vast majority of victims of harassment: 82% of EEOC charges were filed by women.² Furthermore, women of color are disproportionately impacted by workplace harassment. Women of color filed 56% of the claims while only making up 37% of the workforce.³ Black women specifically are three times more likely to file a claim of harassment than their white counterparts.⁴ By implementing new standards and procedures for employers and employees regarding sexual harassment and adopting new protections for survivors of sexual harassment and discrimination, we can begin to create an environment where all women in Oregon can work with dignity and respect.

For more than 100 years, Planned Parenthood has fought for a world where women are equal and in control of their own bodies. We will not stop until all women are treated with dignity and respect in the workplace, in accessing health care and in their everyday lives.

Current Oregon law does not provide sufficient protection to victims of harassment. We thank the Legislature for considering SB 726A and the opportunity it presents to create workplace safety, accountability and protection for all Oregonians. PPAO respectfully urges your aye vote on SB 726A.

Sincerely,

Emily McLain
Executive Director
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon

¹ <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/02/21/587671849/a-new-survey-finds-eighty-percent-of-women-have-experienced-sexual-harassment>

² https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/task_force/harassment/upload/report.pdf

³ https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/task_force/harassment/upload/report.pdf

⁴ IPUMS-CPS, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org.