



The Oregon Law Center Respectfully Urges Support for HB 3120A

Ensure Workplace Safety for Victims of Intimidation and Hate Crimes.

Comes from the House 58-0-2, from Senate Workforce unanimously

Background:

Oregon's current unemployment compensation statutes provide coverage for victims of the crimes of domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and stalking who are forced to leave work in order to protect their safety or the safety of their families.

Current law recognizes that sometimes, victims of targeted violence must quit their jobs because of a safety threat. Violence victims have "good cause" to leave work, if their safety is at risk.

Without access to unemployment insurance, the loss of economic independence would make it impossible for a victim to relocate to find safety.

The current law has important safeguards to ensure that it will be used reasonably: The applicant must show:

- That he/she is a victim, or the parent or guardian of a minor victim;
- That there is a reasonable belief that there will be future violence;
- That s/he cannot work for protection reasons;
- That s/he pursued reasonable available alternatives to leaving work.

Proposal:

HB 3120 extends current reasonable and important protections for crime victims to ensure that victims of the crime of intimidation are also covered.

- Hate crimes are on the rise across the nation, and victims of these targeted crimes put employees and their co-workers at risk.
- It is in the best interests of employees and of workplaces as a whole that victims be able to take the steps necessary to best protect themselves and their families.
- If a victim must leave work to ensure safety, thru no fault of their own, they should not be denied the support of unemployment benefits.
- The bill defines intimidation crimes to be consistent with the criminal code definitions of first or second degree intimidation, and provides coverage to those who can show it is more likely than not that they are victims of such crimes.

This bill gives victims and their employers a positive option to avoid violence in the workplace, saving victims, families, co-workers, and employers. The law should enable the victim to make safe decisions, as a matter of public policy and in the interests of protecting the victim as well as other employees.

From the desk of

Please support HB 3120A

Laurie Monne Anderson