

Testimony in support of SB 588

Eric Sherman

February 2, 2021

Chair Riley and Members of the Oregon Senate Labor & Business Committee:

I am writing in support of SB 588. I serve as President of IBEW Local 932, representing electrical workers on the Oregon Coast.

Several years ago, I was excited to learn that an Oregon Paid Sick Leave law was actually coming to fruition. Shortly after, I was dismayed to learn that construction trades, including mine, were exempted from the law. I believe that SB 588 will remedy that exemption and put working Oregonians back on equal footing.

I also serve on our electrical apprenticeship committee and Trust board, and in that capacity, I have the pleasure of meeting many prospective applicants into our great trade. Some of them are fresh out of high school and just getting started; others are a bit older and have decided to switch career paths. When discussing our wage and benefit package, one of the most common questions I receive is, "What kind of paid sick leave plan is there?" In response, unfortunately, I have to say "None." This is a significant deterrent for many otherwise qualified and capable people, and I fear that we are losing out on many potentially excellent skilled tradespeople due to the sick leave exemption. Given how tough it is to fill the skills gap, this is a detriment not only to our trade, but to any Oregonian that is concerned about advancing renewable energy, repairing/replacing critical infrastructure, and training future generations on how to keep Oregon up and running through apprenticeship programs.

I am confident that others will testify on the numerous merits of SB 588, including those based on workplace safety and disease transmission, improvement of worker morale and job retention, reduced health care costs, and so forth. But I feel it is important legislation that is beneficial for working Oregonians, and for Oregon in general, and should absolutely be passed into law.

I sincerely urge your support for Senate Bill 588.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Sherman

President, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 932

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