



## SB 483

Senator Prozanski, Members of the Committee,

My name is Dan Torres and I am with Oregon AFSCME Council 75. Oregon AFSCME represents over 30,000 workers across the state from non-profit to local government to state public employees. Oregon AFSCME members work every day in many worksites that interact with the public and provide services for thousands of Oregonians. AFSCME members work in hundreds of worksites across the state including working with dangerous equipment and with increased risk of exposure to safety and health issues.

When issues arise at the workplace that put our members, their co-workers or the public at significant risk due to safety or health, it is imperative that they are able to bring those concerns up without fear of retaliation or retribution. Too often workers are put in a position where they want to speak up but don't because of fear from retaliation. This is why we are testifying today in support of SB 483 with the -1 amendments.

SB 483 helps balance the power between employer and employee when it comes to dealing with retaliation cases while still providing a chance for the employer to provide a rebuttal position. A system designed to protect workers and provide a safe place to raise concerns does little good if the employee is at constant risk of retaliation. It is even worse when they are forced to prove retaliation instead of the reverse of the employer proving it wasn't. Employers are the ones who hold all the records and documentation many employees need to prove retaliation and that can be a large barrier to employees.

Oregon AFSCME encourages your adoption of the -1 amendments and to send the bill to the floor with a do pass recommendation. This bill represents a balancing of the system and a change which can empower more workers to speak out for themselves and their co-workers.

Thank you for your time.

Dan Torres  
Political Coordinator  
Oregon AFSCME