

House Committee on Economic Recovery and Prosperity
Testimony in Support of HB 4074

February 2, 2022

Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Cate & Kropf, and Representatives
Bonham, Hudson, Levy, Prusak, Ruiz, Wallan, and Witt,

For the record, I am Natasha Haunsperger, Chair of the [Oregon Commission for Women](#) (OCFW), and in my other role, I am a Police Officer with the Portland Police Bureau. I applied for an appointment to the Oregon Commission for Women because of their active commitment to public policy and its intersection with justice-involved women and their continuous advocacy for social change and promoting human rights and gender rights.

1. OCFW works toward economic, social, political, and legal equity for the women of Oregon with particular focus on marginalized and underrepresented women of color. We do this through advocacy, public policy research, leadership development, and partnerships.
2. In our statutory role of bringing equity focus and community voice into Oregon policy making, OCFW strongly supports HB 4074.

We support and endorse HB 4074 because it enhances state-sanctioned testing for THC at all lifecycles of a cannabis crop's maturation and requires that employees and workers at unregulated and illicit cannabis production sites report human trafficking criminal activities.

When Oregon made recreational cannabis production and industry legal in 2014, it was a tectonic shift in our State from socio-cultural, criminal justice, political, health care and, especially, economic lenses. Regardless of where we, as a collective, stand on this complex issue, this aspect of economic infrastructure in Oregon is in place - and legal and lawful cannabis production business contributes to the economic revenue growth. As is the case in many profitable industries, dark-networks and illicit criminal groups seize financial opportunities at the expense of innocent victims' lives and safety. These illicit

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operations lead to gross injustices, violations of human rights and a creation of gray/shadow labor markets.

HB 4074 is timely and coincides with the recognition of January as a national anti-human trafficking month that our state and federal stakeholders reinforced by holding a series of panels and presentations on this very same issue – labor trafficking at illicit cannabis production sites in Oregon.

As highlighted by HB 4074, evidence shows that there is a significant increase in illegal cannabis grow operations that contain plants with above the legal THC grade. Nov 21, 2021.¹

Additionally, reports by both Jackson and Josephine County law enforcement agencies show evidence of labor human trafficking of both USA citizens and foreign-born migrant workers.²

In September 2012, President Obama provided remarks at the Clinton Global Initiative and so eloquently portrayed the nature of labor trafficking, and I hope to draw a direct parallel to our state’s contemporary problem:

“...It ought to concern every person, because it is a debasement of our common humanity. It ought to concern every community, because it tears at our social fabric. It ought to concern every business, because it distorts markets. It ought to concern every nation, because it endangers public health and fuels violence and organized crime. I’m talking about the injustice, the outrage, of human trafficking, which must be called by its true name -- modern slavery,” [Remarks by the President to the Clinton Global Initiative | whitehouse.gov \(archives.gov\)](https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/09/12/president-obamas-remarks-at-the-clinton-global-initiative)

These tragic and alarming Oregon-based incidents illustrate the scope of this problem but above all raise a vital issue of the indirect impact on the livability on our farming community, economic stability, and overall community safety.

Some state stakeholders were alerted to the critical shortage and limited staffing of trained inspectors to conduct field-testing’s for THC content, and lack of immediate response strategies and resources across justice sectors.

HB 4074 addresses the very same issues and advocates for addressing these systemic gaps by developing a statewide system of increasing testing and reporting of illicit cannabis sites. In addition, what this bill could create is a direct pathway for timely and proactive

¹ Selsky, Andrew. “[Migrant Oregon Weed Workers Face Threats Amid Illegal Boom.](#)” The Register Guard, Nov. 4, 2021

² Prince, Sophia. “[Southern Oregon Investigators Suspect Human Trafficking, Forced Labor at Cannabis Farm.](#)” Oregon Public Broadcasting, Aug. 20 2021.



identification of labor trafficking victims. It would allow specific stakeholders to act within that very short and fleeting window of opportunity to detect labor trafficking as a part of their lawful duties while conducting THC testing.

We need holistic, comprehensive, and sustainable prevention practices, laws, and strategies to successfully address the complex scope of this issue and address the unforeseen consequences, mitigate harm factors and promote economic growth and liberties – in doing this, we can proactively identify areas that need to be reinforced, strengthened, and focused on human and civil rights and disrupt the devastating cycle of trafficking and further harm to innocent victims.

HB 4074 provides a legal framework for the development of a holistic, coordinated, and comprehensive response to eradicating labor trafficking and disrupting the expansion of illicit cannabis production and its gray economy. By adopting this singular bill, Oregon will not magically eradicate labor trafficking – but collective response and ownership of the problem must start somewhere. HB 4074 offers a path in the right direction of continued criminal justice, economic, gender and equity advocacy.

If this is not addressed now, the state would be passively complicit in the continuation of human rights abuses by private actors.

I urge you to vote yes on HB 4074.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Natarla Harvey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chair of the Oregon Commission for Women

