

February 15, 2023
Senate Judiciary Committee

No on Senate Bill 754

Testimony of Amanda Halbirt, SW Portland

Chair Prozanski and members of the Committee, my name is Amanda Halbirt and I'm here today to strongly urge you to vote No to limiting the rights of Oregonians. I thank you for hearing my story today because it's crucial that wrongdoers are held accountable when they don't take the safety of their customers seriously – in my case it was literally a matter of life and death. Tomorrow will be exactly three years since I lost my husband, Ryan Zeitner, due to the negligence of Mt. Hood Meadows and I can tell you it's still hard for me to believe or even talk about.

My husband was a long-time, avid snowboarder and because he had a son, our son, Judah, later in life, safety was his highest priority. He wouldn't do anything to risk leaving us. He always went to the mountain with a riding buddy, and only took runs that matched his ability.

But that day, three years ago, the run was a solid, football field-sized sheet of ice. An un-skiable slope. Ryan immediately smashed against the solid ice and slid head-first and unconscious 100 yards down the severely steep slope until he violently collided with a ski patrolman at the bottom of the ice. He didn't die immediately and regained consciousness only briefly as a skier tried to tend to him, but he never spoke and was pronounced dead when he reached the ambulance waiting in the parking lot.

The Moon Bowl run should have never been open and if Meadows had simply sized up conditions and acted with safety in mind first, I wouldn't be here today begging for your vote. I later learned that the Meadows medical center was filled with people injured on the ice sheet that day. Why was this run even open? It's a question that will always haunt me. And while no amount of frustrating speculation or money can ever bring Ryan back – I want you all to consider there are people up there, today, and tomorrow, and are they safe? Has Meadows learned anything from Ryan's death? Are they doing anything differently? I don't want anybody else to go through this unspeakable anguish.

Three years ago two police officers came to our home, and with my 2yr old by my side, I received the news of Ryan's fatal accident. Our son is now 5, and his memories of his father have become faint. What Judah remembers are the two men who showed up, his mother sobbing uncontrollably, and the confusion of not understanding where his dad is. It is now up to me to consistently tell him how amazing his father was and how much he loved him.

When Ryan would go to the mountain, I never had a fear of him snowboarding and certainly never losing his life because of it. Now I can't even look at the mountain. It's unfathomable that blanket immunity would be offered to large corporations who ignore simple safety precautions that impact lives in such a major way.

We're talking about the lives of your constituents. Think about losing a family member to such avoidable negligence and then consider what this bill would do.

I urge you to **Vote No on SB 754**. Thank you.