

Submitter: Ben Romanaggi
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure: SB848

Historical bridges have always fascinated me, which is why I went to Oregon State University for civil engineering. I now work at an engineering firm building and assessing bridges in our community. As an engineer my work has many impacts; most importantly helping people.

What I didn't learn in school was the complicated legal work happening behind the scenes. Sadly, Oregon engineers are being forced into unfair contracting practices called "duty to defend" clauses, which require us to pay legal expenses for those involved in construction projects even before fault is determined. This is detrimental to design firms, especially women and minority small businesses.

Because engineers are being forced to shoulder the legal liability and expense far beyond what they're able to get insured for, fewer projects are being designed and built in our communities. Other states, including California and Washington, have laws stating an engineer will only be responsible for defense costs to the proportionate extent of their liability or fault and Oregon should follow suit.

Senate Bill 848 would fix this problem by eliminating bad and unfair contract practices and ensure everyone involved in a project pays their fair share. I hope Oregon lawmakers pass this bill because it will allow me to continue to help people. This isn't about shirking responsibility – it's about ensuring fairness so everyone is paying their own way.