



Chair Holvy, Vice Chairs Sosa, Elmer, and members of the committee,

My name is Odalis Aguilar and a political coordinator with Oregon AFSCME. Thank you for allowing us to share our support for HB 3471 with the -2 amendment.

Oregon AFSCME believes in economic and social justice for all Oregon workers and their families. One of our priorities is to empower and unite workers to create change in their workplaces and communities. Oregon AFSCME represents over 33,000 workers in the public sector. Our members work for the State of Oregon in addition to counties, municipalities and behavioral health nonprofits across Oregon as well as self-employed child care providers.

Navigating the workers compensation system can be very challenging for an everyday worker. Most folks do not have the time to go through the system and understand the intricacies of how the system works nor have time to read the fine print. When a worker disputes a claim related to an injury and goes through a negotiations process, they often require workers to settle and agree on terms where they quit their job immediately and never work for the employer – or their subsidiaries again – as a condition of their settlement.

That means that in order for workers to finally get their workers' compensation wage replacement or medical reimbursements to cover their incurred bills, they have to agree to permanently leave their job. And we know that for many workers, simply walking away from their workers' compensation benefits is simply not an actual choice when they have medical debt and expenses rapidly incurring for themselves and their families.

Countless Oregonians already do not file workers' compensation claims because they've seen their co-workers go out on workers' comp and never return. Most workers do want to get better and go back to work. They should be able to access the medical care they need to heal their bodies and should not be treated like damaged goods or as if they are going to "game the system" just because they had a workers' compensation claim. We encourage your support of HB 3471 to remove arbitrary barriers to making sure that injured workers can get back to work.

We strongly encourage your support of HB 3471 with the -2 amendment to help make sure that workers can get back to work after they've been injured on the job.

Odalis Aguilar Aguilar
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