



Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Bonham and members of the committee,

My name is Odalis Aguilar and a political coordinator with Oregon AFSCME. 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 and private 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.

Oregon AFSCME supports SB 851 with the -1 amendment which aims to prevent and address hostile work environments, defined as those in which employees experience workplace bullying that is severe enough to cause physical or psychological harm.

Workers deserve a workplace where they feel safe, heard, and should not fear for themselves in a place where they spend so much time. Bullying can take a toll on one's body and can get in the way of the productivity of an individual. Not addressing the psychological abuse that occurs in a workplace can create a hostile environment that triggers a domino effect.

While we hope that employers are taking the necessary steps to ensure safe and bully-free workspaces, we must also ensure by passing SB 851; that all employers are also doing their part and creating legal incentives for employers to prevent and respond to employee allegations of workplace bullying. It additionally also has mechanisms against unlawful retaliation, required investigative process; including arbitration, mediation and legal action which is imperative to worker safety. By requiring the Bureau of Labor and Industries to set the stage and establish model procedures and policies that employers shall adopt in order to oppose, investigate, and respond to allegations of workplace bullying in a timely manner, employers can even further work towards a safer work environment.

Oregon AFSCME unequivocally supports legislation that keeps workers safe and creates environments where employees feel supported. Thank you for your consideration and we urge your support for SB 851 with the -1 amendment.

Odalis Aguilar Aguilar
Political Coordinator
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