



**Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council**  
6401 SE Foster ▪ Portland, OR 97206

March 16th, 2023

Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Bonham, and Members of the Committee,

**Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 907 to allow workers the right to refuse dangerous work.** My name is Alberto Gallegos and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Oregon. SEIU Oregon is composed of SEIU Local 503 and SEIU Local 49, which together represent over 87,000 people. Local 49 represents private sector janitors, property service workers, light manufacturing, and healthcare workers; while Local 503 represents homecare workers, private nonprofit workers, in-home childcare providers, nursing home workers, and state and local government employees.

Although there are already state and federal rules in place allowing workers to refuse dangerous work, the reality of the situation is that it is often difficult for a worker to actually exercise this right due to complex language causing confusion and fear of retaliation—which is often the case. This fear and confusion has resulted in workplace hazards killing approximately 125,000 workers each year in the U.S.—4,764 from traumatic injuries and another 120,000 from occupational diseases. This averages out to 340 workers deaths each day from hazardous working conditions.

SB 907 would allow workers to reasonably refuse to do work that can cause them death, serious impairment, or serious injury— such as extreme heat or unsafe equipment. If a worker decides to exercise this right, then an employer must either fix the dangerous condition or move them to other jobs that are not hazardous. This bill would also give workers the right to use sick time, PTO, or vacation time to leave/refuse to report to a worksite due to extreme natural disasters, active evacuations, and acts of criminal violence such as mass shootings.

As previously stated, there are already rules established in Oregon to allow workers to refuse dangerous work, this bill would simply clarify those rules and allow workers to properly exercise their right to protect themselves without fear of retaliation.

**SEIU Oregon urges this committee to vote in support of SB 907.**

Thank you,

Alberto Gallegos  
Political and Government Relations Organizer  
SEIU, Oregon State Council