

RE: Opposition to House Bill 3471

I am providing this public comment from two perspectives. One is from a second-generation union steamfitter, and the other is, in an employer's representative opinion, a position held as a Corporate Safety Director. The union contractor in Portland OR is the US's fifth largest self-performing contractor that is a signatory to many union trades, including but not limited to Pipefitters, Plumbers, Iron Workers, Carpenters, Labors, Millwrights, as well as direct staff.

In my position for over 22 years, I managed all worker's compensation claims in Oregon and six other states. We work on OCIP, CCIP, and Self-Insured projects with 6-8 insurance carriers. We have utilized employment releases as part of our claim settlement process on many occasions. In every case I have been a part of, there has been legal representation at arm's length on both sides of the negotiation.

When a claim process concludes that a separation of employment benefits the employee and the employer, the claims process becomes strained and contentious, most typically during a disputed condition or body part. The ability to create an agreed upon separation of employment in the form of an employment release is a tremendous benefit to the employee and employer.

Additionally, most union hiring dispatch rules require employees to take calls in the order they are on the dispatch list. Depending on the locals, they are moved to the bottom of the out-of-work list if they refuse one or a few calls. This makes it challenging if the worker does not want to take a call for a specific company due to a contention relationship rendered at the fruition of a claim. On the contrary, an employment release creates no harm to the employee, and they can refuse the call and remain in their position. Since they are a utopic amount of signatory employers, this is unharmed to the employee.

Under the new HB3471, the most logical conclusion is to stipulate that all employment releases must be under the advisement of two represented parties.

Sincerely,

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Corporate Safety Director