



Advocating for Equity and Diversity throughout Oregon

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

For the record, I am Natasha Haunsperger, a Co-Chair of the Oregon Commission for Women (OCFW), and in my other role, I am also a Portland Police Officer. For twelve years, I have been responding to labor trafficking criminal activities and interviewing victims, survivors, and their families.

It is with gratitude that I submit this testimony on behalf of the Oregon Advocacy Commissions (OACs) – the Oregon Commission for Women, Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (OCBA), Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs (OCHA), and the Oregon Commission for Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs—to urge the Committee to support the passage of SB 1052.

Each Commission works for the implementation and establishment of social, political, economic, and legal equity for their constituent populations in the state of Oregon. Each Commission has several statutory duties, all of which revolve around advocacy and equity.

My testimony today results from privileged experience and being entrusted by labor trafficking victims to not only share their stories but, foremost, ensure that they inform our collective understanding of the scope and the nature of labor trafficking exploitation and victimization.

I firmly express my support and endorsement of SB 1052, Improving Oregon's Response to Labor Trafficking, which focuses on three major areas of legislative governance:

- Updating Oregon's Criminal labor trafficking laws
- Expanding victim and survivor protections
- Addressing the necessary training of state agency employees

Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs
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Sang Tzun Phan, Co-Chair
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Oregon Commission for Women

Natasha Haunsperger, Co-Chair
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In 2000, Congress enacted a Trafficking Victim Protection Act (TVPA), a set of comprehensive federal laws governing the national response to the issue of human trafficking. While our state implemented its anti-trafficking legislation and statewide response in 2007, the primary focus was on addressing commercial sex trafficking and serving the victims of sexual exploitation. Unfortunately, the issue and problem of labor trafficking remained on the margins of justice system response and priority due to complex socio-political, structural, and institutional barriers and challenges.

Emerging labor trafficking academic research and existing trafficking data show that labor trafficking exists in all segments of American society, and no community and industry sector is immune to it. In practice, labor trafficking is a crime of exploitation for financial gain and profit or some form of "value exchange," such as food, shelter, or drugs. Traffickers, known to range from individual actors to illicit groups, both lawful and illicit businesses, exploit the US economic infrastructure and distort labor markets. Whether in agriculture settings, construction, seasonal farm work, the hospitality industry, or even during post-disaster settings and national recovery efforts, traffickers seek opportunities to exploit vulnerable victims and the current American justice system.


Not only do human trafficking activities grossly violate human rights and criminal justice and immigration laws, but they also harm the American economy, in part through the creation of illegal labor markets. [1] For example, per federal government estimates, human trafficking-related illegal labor markets generate annual profits of approximately \$9.5 billion, which in turn, supports other criminal activities, including money laundering, drug trafficking, and human smuggling. [2]

Traffickers use force, fraud, or coercion to exhibit control and power over vulnerable victims, disregarding victims' rights, safety, and existing state and federal laws. Illicit labor trafficking is not only a justice problem; above all, it is a violation of civil rights, democratic governance framework, and legal labor markets, and it's a distortion of the gender and racial justice ecosystem. [3]

Many practitioners describe labor trafficking as an invisible crime, hidden from public view, existing and thriving in a parallel universe to mainstream America. Labor trafficking victims can spend many years, even decades, in captivity, experiencing prolonged mental, physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and torment. Many labor trafficking crimes are not reported to and investigated by the police; traffickers are



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rarely punished by the law and held accountable for their egregious acts. Anecdotal evidence highlights that most labor trafficking victims rarely interface with the justice system and receive needed victims' assistance and support – to frame it plainly, labor trafficking victims rarely, if ever, self-report to the police, and they self-identify as victims of crime.

For example, a historic Portland Police Bureau labor trafficking case best illustrates such a missed opportunity for police to timely and proactively identify elements of labor trafficking, rescue a victim and hold a perpetrator accountable. In 2017, I met a labor trafficking survivor who, for the first time, provided a statement on account of prolonged labor trafficking exploitation and abuse by a known family member that occurred about ten years ago. The victim, at the time, was an undocumented migrant from Honduras who spoke no English. The trafficker used physical force and threats of deportation if the victim refused to sell drugs to pay the lodging and shelter fees. When local police officers arrested the victim during a drug bust, they failed to identify elements of labor trafficking. Officers solely acted according to their training and procedure, but a valuable opportunity to disrupt labor trafficking, arrest the trafficker, rescue a victim and collect valuable intelligence was missed.


If officers had more training in this area, they would have identified a drug trafficking ring and exploitation of undocumented minors. Unfortunately, many labor trafficking victims spend years and even decades before they can provide their testimony to the police. In most cases, labor trafficking victims and survivors first intersect with a service provider and immigration attorneys, best positioned to report labor trafficking further and advocate for their clients.


A critical question arises how local and state law enforcement can identify and disrupt human trafficking and identify victims? One approach is to develop a standardized statewide law enforcement basic training that is a part of the state academy curriculum.

SB 1052 proposes such training development and implementation for law enforcement at the DPPST Basic academy and other adequate state employees who are best positioned to identify a labor trafficking victim while executing their daily tasks of serving the Oregonian.



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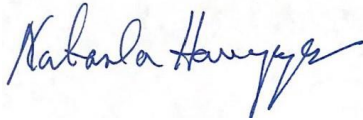
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On behalf Oregon Advocacy Commissions, and individually as a concerned citizen who has dedicated her life to making our state safer, we, the undersigned, urge the Committee to pass SB 1052 to ensure the development of robust, holistic, victim-centered, and culturally responsive laws, policies, and practices that, if enacted, could enhance our collective response and understanding of the scope and the nature of the labor trafficking problem in Oregon.

Sincerely,



Natasha Haunsperger,
Co-Chair, OCFW



Liz Foucher-Branch
Commissioner, OCBA



Melina Moran
Chair, OCHA



Jackie Leung
Co-Chair, OCAPIA



Sam Phan
Co-Chair, OCAPIA



John Iglesias
Vice-Chair, OCAPIA

[1] Farrell, McDevitt, and Fahy, *Understanding and Improving Law Enforcement Responses*, 3.

[2] Farrell, McDevitt, and Fahy, 3.

[3] Department of State, *2018 Trafficking in Persons Report* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 2018), 5,
<https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-trafficking-in-persons-report/>

