



Date: March 30, 2023
To: Senate Committee on Labor and Business
From: Oregon Health Equity Alliance
RE: Support SB 907

Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Bonham, members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Oregon Health Equity Alliance (OHEA) we are writing to support **Senate Bill 907** Right to Refuse Dangerous Work.

OHEA is a people of color-led collaborative, organized to center and uplift the wisdom of our communities of color through racial justice informed health equity policies and practices as part of the movement to dismantle white supremacy and shift the imbalance of power. OHEA serves Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties as one of ten regional health equity coalitions across Oregon.

OHEA strongly believes that every worker has the right to refuse unsafe work. Every worker deserves to work in the best conditions possible to them, and not have to fear losing their jobs because they feel unsafe in their place of work. They deserve the right to refuse work if the working conditions are jeopardizing their health. No one deserves to die while on the job, and everyone deserves the right to say no if they find themselves in a dangerous work environment.

Here in Oregon, people working on the frontlines--including in smoke and extreme heat--are at a high risk of illness and death. For example, there were at least [254 complaints](#) submitted to OSHA during the heat waves of Summer 2020 and at least 3 deaths during the 3 day period of the heat-dome. Increasing extreme weather events are only exacerbating these problems for many workers.

SB 907 would allow workers to reasonably refuse to do work that can cause serious impairment, injury, or death, which includes the use of unsafe equipment. SB 907 does not create a new right-- nor does it give an unfettered right for workers to refuse to work. It takes an existing right that is hidden in an administrative rule, and clarifies it in statute. It would use Oregon's already-established rebuttable presumption to protect workers who exercise this right from retaliation.

OHEA urges your support in Senate Bill 907. Oregon lawmakers have the opportunity to ensure safer worker conditions. We need to give workers the option to protect themselves in dangerous workplace situations. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Oregon Health Equity Alliance