

April 18, 2023

Honorable Chair and Committee Members
Committee on Rules
Oregon House of Representatives

Re: House Bill 3568

Dear Chair Fahey and Members of the Committee,

I am here today to speak in support of the bill and to seek your support and vote in favor of House Bill 3568.

My name is Michael Beranbaum, I am the Secretary-Treasurer and Principal Officer of Teamsters Local 670. Our main office is here in Salem with regional staff in both the Hermiston and Ontario areas with over three thousand (3,000) members spanning from Linn and Marion Counties in the western portion of the state, from Hood River to Bend to Pendleton in the central portion of the state and La Grande to Ontario in the eastern portion of the state, as well as, from Nampa to the Oregon border in western Idaho. I have been employed by the Teamsters Union, either at a Local Union, Joint Council, or International Union level continuously since 1993. I started my Teamster career working in a warehouse in Lynnwood Washington in 1987 and worked tirelessly in support of our Union members and working people in Washington, lobbying in favor of worker friendly legislation at the Washington legislature until taking my current role in Oregon in January of 2017. Since January of 2017 I have fought to improve the livelihoods and working conditions of the members of our Local Union and working women and men across Oregon and Western Idaho.

The intent of this bill is not to solve the problems which we believe exist but instead to bring to light the problems that we know exist within the largest employers in the Warehouse industry, employers like Amazon, Walmart and other similarly sized Companies. House Bill 3568 will hold all covered employers responsible for notifying employees at the time they are hired what the actual expectations are related to quotas and production standards while also making sure the new hire is made aware of the penalty(ies) for noncompliance. Additionally, providing employers with appropriate guidelines to build fair and equitable quotas and production standards which take into consideration the health, safety and wellbeing of the workers. Nothing in this bill hinders employers from the ability to create and/or modify quotas or production standards it simply

sets fair and equitable standard for which they will be held accountable to, no different than they will be able to hold their employees accountable. The Bill creates a checks and balance systems that does not exist today, requiring employers to maintain records related to the quotas and production standards, employees and their either compliance or noncompliance, and providing the legal authority for the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI), current and past employees to have access to those records to ensure the employers are treating workers in the State of Oregon fairly and in a legal manner. BOLI will be granted the authority to generate rules and regulations to ensure both an even playing field for all employers in the industry and the safety, health and wellbeing of Oregonians who work in this industry. You are likely to hear from or have already heard from companies like Amazon and Walmart who will tell you there is no need for BOLI to look into how they staff and run their warehouses because "Safety is their number one priority", however, the facts do not bear out their claims. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Amazon warehouse workers in the United States specifically, and other such similarly situated employers reported in 2021 that their workers suffered twice the level of serious injuries, 6.8 serious injuries for every hundred (100) Amazon warehouse workers totaling more than thirty-eight thousand (38,000) in 2021 versus 3.3 serious injuries per hundred (100) workers at other employers in the warehouse industry. The 2021 numbers were up twenty percent (20%) from OSHA's 2020 numbers which tells me these employers, if left to their own determination, will not put in place adequate safety and health programs or working conditions to protect working women and men in Oregon. Our goal in supporting this legislation, is to improve the working environment of warehouse workers in Oregon, regardless if they are represented by a Union or not, many of whom are at the mercy of their employers, such as Amazon and Wal-Mart. These serious levels of worker injuries due in part to the lack of governmental oversight and dangerous and hazardous working conditions like unrealistic production quotas and standards designed to maximize corporate earnings and profits not protect the lives of workers. Amazon and Walmart have proven time and time again that they will put their political agendas and desire for ever-growing profits ahead of the safety of their workforces. They are also willing to spend unlimited resources and make promises to legislative bodies, at the state, county or city level, in order to get what they want with no intent to deliver on their commitments. Our collective goal as citizens and elected officials should first and foremost be the livelihood, health and safety of the citizens of the State of Oregon not aiding an abetting the interests of corporate behemoths.

Similar pieces of legislation to House Bill 3568 have already been passed in the states of New York and California, as well as, there are similar bills currently introduced this year

in Alabama, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas and Washington. Our goal here, and in the other States currently considering similar legislation, is to create a system that ensures Employers in the Warehouse Industry are held accountable for the safety and well-being of the workers that make them profitable. Every employee in Oregon deserves to work in a safe environment and to know they will come home at the end of each workday uninjured and able to continue to provide for their families. Oregon has a long history of being proactive in worker rights and protections and I encourage you and every member of this committee, regardless of their party affiliation, to pass House Bill 3568 out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation and to not only support it on the floor but work to ensure its passage both in the House but also to do everything you can to ensure it also passes the Senate and reaches the Governor's desk for signature.

Chairman Fahey, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Kropf, as well as Committee members Nosse, Scharf, Valderrama and Wallan thank you for your time today and I look forward to HB 3568 passing out of committee. I will make myself available to you and the other members of the Oregon Legislature if you have questions moving forward as we work to get HB 3568 to Governor Kotek for her signature.

Sincerely,



Michael Beranbaum
Secretary-Treasurer
Teamsters Local 670
Cell: 503-251-2305
E-mail: mberanbaum@teamster670.org