



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Testimony in Support of HB 3568

April 18, 2023

Chair Fahey, Vice Chairs Breese-Iverson and Kropf, Members of the Committee,

My name is Khanh Pham, State Representative for House District 46, representing outer SE Portland. I am here today to voice my support for protecting Oregon's warehouse workers with House Bill 3568 and the - 1 Amendment.

My district of outer SE Portland is home to many people who work in the warehouse industry, specifically for Amazon at the PDX9 facility in Troutdale. I am here today with a grave sense of urgency, because data suggests that Oregon workers are being put in harm's way on a daily basis as part of a business model that sees them as disposable. This body must act now to protect warehouse workers.

PDX9 employs around 2,000 people in fulfillment, making it a major employer for our area. A 2019 investigation by the journalists at Reveal, a project of the nonprofit Center for Investigative Reporting, highlighted how the injury rate of workers at PDX9 is likely among the worst in the United States. These high injury rates are driven by the use of robots, as well as surveillance of workers and algorithmic task management, that push human beings to work as fast as machines, until their bodies literally break. According to Amazon's own records, 26 out of every 100 workers at PDX9 sustained an injury in 2018.¹

In an interview with the Portland Mercury in 2019, a worker who spoke using a pseudonym for fear of retaliation shared that he'd "counted at least four ambulances arrive at PDX9 while he was working. PDX9 has an on-site health clinic, called AmCare, but the emergency medical technicians on staff only offer temporary relief with ice packs and Band-Aids."²

Band-aids are not enough. We as Oregon legislators must do more. We must pass this bill.

Last March, the state of Washington's Department of Labor and Industries [cited](#) Amazon's flagship facility in Kent, Washington, over unsafe work practices. This was the third time an Amazon facility was cited, so this was considered a "*willful violation*" with a \$60,000 fine for *knowingly* putting workers at risk of injury at its fulfillment center. The agency found that many Amazon jobs involve "repetitive motions, lifting, carrying, twisting, and other physical work" and

¹ ["Behind the Smiles: Amazon's internal injury records expose the true toll of its relentless drive for speed"](#) - Reveal News (November 25, 2019)

² ["What It's Like to Work at Troutdale's Notoriously Dangerous Amazon Warehouse"](#) - Portland Mercury (December 9, 2019)

said workers are required to perform these tasks “at such a fast pace that it increases the risk of injury.”³

A federal OSHA investigation showed that in 2021, Amazon’s injury rate was almost one and a half times the industry average, and at some Amazon warehouse locations, the rate was as high as 12 workers out of 100.

Seven out of seven warehouses that OSHA investigated in the past year have been cited, and issued the maximum penalty for general violations. Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health Doug Parker explained: "Amazon's operating methods are creating hazardous work conditions and processes, leading to serious worker injuries. They need to take these injuries seriously and implement a company-wide strategy to protect their employees from these well-known and preventable hazards."⁴

According to a newly released April 2023 analysis that examined Amazon’s self-reporting of worker injuries, Amazon employed 36% of U.S. warehouse workers in 2022, but was responsible for more than 53% of all serious injuries in the industry. Amazon’s injury rate was [more than double](#) that of all non-Amazon warehouses in 2022.⁵

The US Justice Department is also investigating possible false statements made to regulators by Amazon about the crisis of worker safety.⁶ The United States Congress is looking into Amazon’s labor practices after the deaths of six workers, particularly citing reports from December 2021 that supervisors at the Amazon facility in Edwardsville, Illinois, threatened those employees that they would be fired if they left work during a dangerous storm - and noted similar circumstances during the extreme heat dome in the Pacific Northwest in Summer 2021.⁷

This bill is a step towards addressing worsening working conditions for warehouse workers in Oregon stemming from the outsized influence of a corporation with gross profit of over \$225 billion last year, that has just been cited by the NLRB again for breaking the law by heavy handed and illegal union busting tactics.⁸

Amazon’s policies of algorithmic task management to drive a blistering pace that we see across the country is happening here in Oregon. It’s time these workers are heard here in Salem as well. Oregonians working in warehouses deserve to be protected from preventable injury on the job. Please join me in supporting HB 3568 with the -1 Amendment. Thank you.

³ [“Amazon cited for unsafe work practices at Kent fulfillment center”](#) - Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (March 21, 2022)

⁴ [US Department of Labor finds Amazon exposed workers to unsafe conditions, ergonomic hazards at three more warehouses in Colorado, Idaho, New York](#) - United States Department of Labor (February 1, 2023)

⁵ [In Denial: Amazon's Continuing Failure to Fix Its Injury Crisis](#) - The Strategic Organizing Center (April 2023)

⁶ [Justice Department opens civil probe into Amazon's workplace safety practices](#) - CNN Business (July 19, 2022)

⁷ [House committee probes labor practices at Amazon](#) - CNN Business (April 1, 2022)

⁸ [Amazon's Anti-Union Consultant Broke The Law, Judge Rules \(msn.com\)](#)