

To: House Committee on Business and Labor
Re: Senate Bill 907 A
Date: May 9, 2023

Greetings Chair Holvey, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Sosa, and Members of the Committee,

I am Dr. Theodora Tsongas, an environmental health scientist specializing in occupational and environmental epidemiology, with a career in public health. I am a member of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility and of the Occupational Health and Safety Section of the American Public Health Association. I am testifying today in support of SB 907 because it is an easy mid-course correction to address a significant problem and to save worker lives in Oregon.

It is easy because Oregon's regulations already prohibit harassment and discrimination. With this correction, workers will know that they don't have to fear the loss of livelihood or retaliation when they understand their workplace conditions and know when something is too dangerous to continue. This small change would also empower workers to understand their workplace and the necessity for safety and health precautions, and to know what the limits are. It can improve workplace safety and health and save employers' resources in the long run.

Severe inequities in dangerous working conditions have created unacceptable discrepancies in those who face the largest burdens of disease, injury and death because of their jobs. Workers of color, immigrant workers, aging workers, and temporary and contract workers face increased risk of fatalities and injuries. And workers in low wage jobs are the least able to risk their employment because of fear of retaliation.

No one should have to put themselves into a known dangerous situation without protection that could lead to death or serious injury or illness in order to keep their job. Workers are best able to know when conditions are untenable. Employers will benefit from respecting their workers' knowledge, and workers will be more productive if they feel that they have some control over working conditions. This includes when to say No!

SB 907 is a win-win proposal. Please support it and keep Oregon's workforce safe, healthy, and working.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment and for your diligence and hard work!

For more information, please see: AFL/CIO, [Death on the Job: The toll of neglect, 2022](https://aflcio.org/reports/death-job-toll-neglect-2022#:~:text=340%20workers%20died%20each%20day,was%203.4%20per%20100%2C000%20workers). Report. <https://aflcio.org/reports/death-job-toll-neglect-2022#:~:text=340%20workers%20died%20each%20day,was%203.4%20per%20100%2C000%20workers>.