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Testimony of Arthur Towers

OTLA Political Director

**In Opposition to HB 4050**

Before the House Committee on Business and Labor

February 12, 2024

Chair Holvey, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Sosa, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in opposition to HB 4050 regarding changes to Oregon's pay equity law. This body did an excellent job addressing the issue of pay equity in the 2017 session. It was tough to strike the right balance. There were tense moments, but the enrolled version of the legislation had at least a dozen sponsors from each party.

We are concerned that today's legislation throws that bipartisan balance that was carefully constructed off kilter.

Adding the idea of "business necessity" to the list of bona fide factors is extremely troubling. There are already a number of factors that can be considered: training, education, experience, seniority, output, location among others.

Business necessity is a vague term that will open up a wide breadth of areas and create the environment in which pay inequity could be perpetuated – which we know would be an unintended consequence.

Oregon has made strides on reducing the gender gap when it comes to pay. We still have work to be done. Honor the bi-partisan agreement that was reached seven years ago. There have been seven years of stability and predictability for Oregon businesses and workers.

We urge a no vote on HB 4050.