



Oregon Women's Rights Coalition

HB 2271-Unemployment Fix for Some-Oppose

Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Reschke and Walters and members of the committee.

Oregon Women's Rights Coalition has concerns about the bill. Given the uncertainty of Federal employment in Oregon, Federal contract cancellations, Federal research grants and the effect those actions may have on rural areas of Oregon, we urge caution on this bill. Today we have the announcements on tariffs. As is widely reported Oregon exports \$1.1 billion and if there are retaliatory actions on the part of our trading partners our economy could very well suffer.

Federal employment annual wages average \$92,700 in Oregon while the state average is \$68,300.

Federal wages are 60% or higher in Curry, Josephine, Douglas, Lincoln, Yamhill, Wasco, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Baker, Grant, Malheur, Harney, Lake, and Klamath Counties than other wages.

In Wasco County, the Federal average was over two times as high at 101%. So, depending on the number of Federal Employees who are eliminated from Federal employment in the rural areas of the state, the rural economy would likely see decreased employment due to the effect of the loss of the Federal wages in the rural counties.

The Oregon Employment Department statistics for the 1st quarter of 2024 showed 28,570 federal employees in Oregon. The number goes up in the summer due to seasonal employment in recreation areas as well as firefighting. 1

The congressional research service uses the figure of 36,712 broken down by congressional districts. 2

So, we urge caution.

The proponent of this bill from Coos Bay was eloquent in his testimony. He had the unfortunate experience of having one unemployment claim right before the covid pandemic. It was not clear if he continued to operate his auto repair shop during the pandemic. Auto repair was not listed as far as we can determine in the listing of required closures.

The proponent noted that in a prior session our organization questioned whether businesses who received PPE grants would double dip. Here is what we learned.

He paid \$800 per month unemployment for the years 2022,2023,2024, a total of \$28,800.

He would have paid \$200 per month for the same years without the claim, a total of \$7,200.

So, the difference for those three years of higher payments was \$21,600.

He received a Federal PPE payment of \$30,000.

Under this bill he expects to receive a credit of \$2500 per year for three years or \$7500.

So, he will have received from the Federal government \$30,000 plus a credit of \$7500 for a total of \$37,500.

His higher payments were \$21,600.

Whether this bill goes forward or not, it is your decision. However, prior to any action it would be prudent to discover how many other businesses might be in the same situation.

We are in uncertain times, and we believe that caution is in order.

Marcia Kelley

Public Policy Advocate

1. <https://www.qualityinfo.org/-/federal-government-jobs-in-oregon?redirect=%2F>
2. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R47716>