



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

TO: House Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

FROM: Leslie Wu, Policy Advisor to Attorney General Rayfield, Oregon Department of Justice

DATE: March 20, 2025

SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of HB 3234

The Oregon Department of Justice has appreciated the opportunity to work with the sponsor on technical amendments regarding Attorney General enforcement authority in HB 3234. This bill introduces a unique solution to a growing problem for many Oregonians. While the Attorney General has some enforcement authority over HIPAA violations, and certain antitrust authority in the case of healthcare industry mergers, the Attorney General lacks broader investigative or enforcement authority over the healthcare industry. HB 3234 would change Oregon's approach to this area by granting the Attorney General investigative and enforcement powers. These powers would include the ability for the Attorney General to issue civil investigative demands to root out whether unlawful practices are occurring, and the ability to recoup attorney's fees or seek penalties for violations of the law.

This approach would be new to Oregon but does exist at [California's Attorney General's office](#). There, the Healthcare Rights and Access Section takes on proactive healthcare work, and has authority to work on investigations, litigation, and legislation that increases and protects the affordability, accessibility and quality of healthcare in their state. Their team of multiple attorneys devoted specifically to healthcare provides an example of an approach that Oregon could take to increase just access to healthcare. The Oregon Department of Justice currently has only seven consumer protection attorneys, 1/3 the staffing of Washington's consumer protection division. Growing the Attorney General's body of work to include a devoted healthcare section with attorneys working solely on healthcare issues would mean a significant change and help to ensure that appropriate enforcement can be realized.

Leslie Wu, Policy Advisor
Leslie.wu@doj.oregon.gov
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Passage of HB 3234, along with an investment by our State to grow a healthcare consumer protection practice, would allow the Attorney General the authority to investigate whether these negative outcomes in healthcare access are the result of bad actions and seek appropriate redress. We look forward to continued discussions with the bill sponsor to refine the solution and ensure that the agency can adequately implement the policy choices in HB 3234.

Leslie Wu
Leslie.wu@doj.oregon.gov