



March 21, 2025
Re: Senate Bill 1044
To: Senate Labor and Business Committee

SEIU Oregon represents 80,000 workers across the State of Oregon who do essential jobs that make our state stronger. These workers are care providers, transportation workers, custodians, caseworkers, healthcare workers, and more. We have significant concerns about Senate Bill 1044, and would like to focus on a specific example that we believe illustrates why this bill could be harmful to workers.

Late last year, SEIU members celebrated a major victory when ODOT dispatchers won a grievance over missed meal and rest breaks. These were workers in high-stress, critical roles who had gone years without being allowed proper breaks. As one worker shared: “Some of us are working 12-hour shifts with no guarantee of a meal break. It’s not sustainable.” Because of our union’s advocacy, we secured back pay and a commitment from the agency to schedule breaks moving forward. That win was hard fought—and it should never have been necessary.

Unfortunately, this case isn’t an outlier—it’s a symptom of the state’s workforce crisis. A recent SEIU survey found that **46% of members who work for the State of Oregon report missing meal and rest breaks due to excessive workloads**, up from 39% just two years ago. The problem is getting worse, not better—and instead of fixing it, SB 1044 would make it easier for employers to avoid compliance with basic break laws.

Let’s be clear: no one should have to fight this hard just to take a lunch break. And yet, SB 1044 would take us backward at a time when workers need more protections, not fewer.

We need policy that reflects the reality on the ground—where staffing shortages, budget pressures, and rising demands are pushing workers to their limits. This bill would shift even more power to employers while leaving workers with fewer tools to stand up for their rights.

Sincerely,

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