



OREGON STATE FIRE FIGHTERS COUNCIL

International Association of Fire Fighters
AFL-CIO CLC

February 4, 2026

Senate Committee on Labor and Business
Chair Senator Kathleen Taylor
Vice Chair Senator Cedric Hayden

Re: Support of Senate Bill **1519**

Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Hayden and Committee Members,

For the record, Karl Koenig President of the Oregon State Fire Fighters Council. We are the organization that advocates for the 3800 career fire fighters, Prevention, paramedics, EMT's and Wildland professionals across Oregon.

We are in favor of SB 1519 and its increase in the percentage of payment for Temporary Total injury to employees hurt while at work. This bill responsibly increases payment from the 66 2/3 of the average weekly wage to 75% of the average weekly wage. It does not change alternate duty opportunities or complete disability process and payment structure.

As fire fighters we have a high occurrence of sprains and strains that require brief periods of time loss away from work. Even with these injuries our industry has seen decreases in Workers Compensation Insurance rates for over 13 years in a row. We just experienced a 3.3% decrease for 2026. The overall decrease since 2017 is 46.5%! This proposal reflects a responsible increase in payments when a worker is injured at work.

In review of financial impacts against the system it is listed at a 3.1% increase in claim costs which is lower than current COLA and less than the decrease in 2026 rates listed above.

We don't need to carry on over the cost increases of life in general nor the performance of the workers compensation insurance system here in Oregon, but we do need to consider the amount to pay a worker while injured at work.

Please Vote Yes on SB 1519 in Committee to properly compensate workers while on Temporary Injury Leave.

Regards,

Karl Koenig s/s

Karl Koenig

President

Oregon State Fire Fighters Council

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