

Submitter: Peter Bergel
On Behalf Of: Stop Avelo Campaign and Oregon PeaceWorks
Committee: House Committee On Commerce and Consumer Protection
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4150

Testimony of Peter Bergel on HB 4150

Chair Sosa and Members of the Committee:

My name is Peter Bergel, I live in Salem and I am here representing Oregon PeaceWorks and the Stop Avelo Campaign.

I would have given this testimony in person, but was not afforded the opportunity.

Last year I became aware that Avelo Airlines, which had received a subsidy from the Salem City Council to locate at the Salem Airport, had subsequently signed a contract with the Department of Homeland Security to transport deportees. Since my parents were refugees who fled Hitler during the Holocaust, my family history immediately suggested a comparison between Avelo and the trains that took Jews to the concentration camps – one of those having been my grandmother, who died in Auschwitz.

I contacted two of Salem's city councilors to demand that something be done. They advised me that if the contract were broken by the city, it would lose a probable lawsuit.

I began working with others, both locally and across the country and – with excellent leadership by a Salem individual – the Stop Avelo Campaign was born. A chief tactic was to boycott the airline and to encourage others to do so as well. Our first victory was when Avelo closed all its West Coast destinations. Eventually Avelo announced that it was abandoning its deportation contract.

We celebrated, of course, but we also wanted to make sure that we would not have to fight the same battle again with another company.

That is why we strongly support HB 4150 and urge you to join us by sending it to the floor with a Do Pass recommendation.

Thank you.