



SUPPORT for HB 4111

Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Chotzen and Wallan and members of the committee,

My name is Madison Walters, and I am a political liaison and member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555. We represent workers in multiple industry sectors, including grocery, retail, manufacturing and healthcare. We take pride in acting as a strong voice for working people, and we encourage your support of HB 4111 to address discrimination that far too many Oregonians are experiencing at work, in the courts, and on the street.

No one should fear that leaving the house to go to work, buy groceries, or take their child to the hospital could mean that they never return home. Furthermore, all workers should be paid the wages they are owed, without fear of discrimination and retaliation from their employers. However, we know that for far too many Oregonians, that constant fear is a reality. That's why we're asking Legislators to quell that fear as much as possible by passing HB 4111 and strengthening our laws to prevent discrimination based on immigration status.

HB 4111 brings three tangible solutions to achieve this goal in Oregon:

1. Makes immigration status inadmissible in civil court with limited exceptions.
2. Ensures that when a worker has a lawful change in work authorization documents, they cannot be retaliated against for updating those documents with their employer.
3. Adds immigration status and perceived immigration status to Oregon's anti-profiling statute.

Far too often, the first question an immigrant Oregonian asks when considering a civil case, regardless of their actual immigration status, is whether or not their status will come up. Under current practices, immigration status is often brought up early in a case, and while largely irrelevant, is effectively used to intimidate a worker from moving forward or receiving what they are owed. HB 4111 would ensure that immigration status would not be admissible in civil cases unless it is essential to prove a claim.

Civil cases include family court issues, personal injury, discrimination or retaliation, and wage theft, among others. To put wage theft into perspective, on minimum wage violations alone, according to the Oregon Center for Public Policy, workers lost an estimated \$283 million to

\$405 million a year due to being paid less than the minimum wage. ([OCPP](#)) And these are just the cases we *know* about, not the thousands of workers who were too scared to pursue a claim. When a worker has the courage to come forward to seek justice in these cases, we have an obligation to that same worker that they can pursue their case without their immigration status coming up and being entered into the legal record. Many immigrant workers are victims of wage theft and the evidence protections in HB 4111 are vital to making sure all Oregonians can access justice.

Additionally, HB 4111 ensures that if a worker makes a *lawful* update in work authorization documentation, (for example, going from DACA or a green card to citizenship,) their employer cannot fire, demote, or otherwise penalize them. HB 4111 ensures that workers can follow the law without fear that doing so will get them fired. Importantly however, it also does not change the existing law that workers without current legal work authorization documents also cannot legally work.

It's critical that Oregon take the opportunity of the short-session to do everything in our power to make it so that all Oregonians can go to work, access justice in the courts and live their daily lives without crippling fear. Immigrant Oregonians should be able to seek justice, update their workplace documents and not be profiled simply because they come from an immigrant family. All Oregonians should be able to live and thrive in our state, regardless of where we were born or when we arrived in Oregon. Please support HB 4111 to help protect immigrant Oregonians and make Oregon a national leader at this critical moment.

Thank you,

Madison Walters

Political Liaison

United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555



UNITED FOOD & COMMERCIAL WORKERS LOCAL 555

7095 SW Sandburg Street Tigard, Oregon 97281-3555 • ufcw555.org