



PRESS RELEASE

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Oregon Legislature Votes to Protect Workers' Rights and Conditions

Senate Bill 483 A will give employees concerned with health, safety, and worker conditions a voice without fear of retaliation

SALEM, OR—Today the House passed legislation that will protect workers' rights and working conditions, including essential workers, by ensuring employees can raise health, safety, and other workplace concerns without fear of retaliation from employers. [Senate Bill 483 A](#) states that if an employer takes disciplinary action against an employee within 60 days of an employee participating in a protected action, such as filing a safety complaint, it is the responsibility of the employer to demonstrate that the action was not retaliatory. This legislation is important to protect essential workers, who increasingly face vulnerable and dangerous working conditions since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

According to a national survey done in 2020 by the National Employment Law Project, 56% of workers who returned to work did so even though they believed they were seriously risking their health or another family member's health. Of those, 38% reported going to work because they were afraid their employer would penalize them if they didn't. This same study showed 1 in 8 workers has experienced possible retaliatory actions by employers when they have raised health and safety concerns during the pandemic. Black workers are more than twice as likely as white workers to have seen possible retaliation by their employer.

“Many workers are in the public, performing critically needed jobs, standing face to face with this deadly pandemic,” said Majority Leader [Rep. Barbara Smith Warner](#) (D-Portland), who carried the bill on the House Floor. “In many instances, these folks have had to make a decision between speaking up about working conditions that violate health and safety regulations or keeping their job. That is unacceptable and a violation of workers' rights.”

Per the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Agency (OSHA), the agency received 10 times as many complaints in 2020 compared to previous years. The National Employment Law Project

estimates that at least 1.9 million US workers avoid raising health and safety concerns out of fear of retaliation.

“Over this last year Oregon’s frontline workers have put their lives on the line to keep our economy moving, and they continue to provide Oregonians with necessary goods and services during this pandemic,” said [Rep. Winsvey Campos](#) (D-Aloha), who co-sponsored the legislation. “These workers deserve a safe working environment. If employers have a non-retaliatory reason to take disciplinary action, it should be easy for them to demonstrate that.”

SB 483 A, which passed 36 to 20, now moves to the Governor’s desk for consideration.

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