



**OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

June 5th, 2025

Timothy G. Sekerak  
Chief Clerk of the House  
State Capitol Building  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Vote Explanation on SB 170 A

Dear Chief Clerk Sekerak,

I understand that one of the primary goals of SB 170 A is to ensure the safety of Oregon workers by preventing and deterring workplace assaults. I am deeply supportive of that goal. I believe that every worker in Oregon should have the right to feel safe and to be safe when they show up to work. And I know that we have a long way to go in achieving this goal. I believe in funding violence prevention, requiring safe staffing levels, investing in mental health resources, and pursuing other policies to ensure workplace safety and to prevent harm.

I made the difficult choice to vote “no” on SB 170 A, however, because I do not believe that this bill uses the right tool to successfully prevent harm. Based on decades of criminal justice data, both in Oregon and nationally, there is little evidence to support the notion that an increase in criminal penalties leads to a decrease in crime. And I am not aware of any data presented in support of this bill that clarifies how frequently this bill will apply or that suggests this bill will make our workplaces safer. I also have technical concerns with this bill. For example, there is no mental state attached to the circumstance element of the aggravated crime. In other words, it is unclear if the defendant would need to know that the victim is performing official duties as part of the victim’s employment for this section to apply. Based on these concerns, I was unable to support SB 170 A despite my support for its goals.

Understanding that SB 170 A is likely to become law, I sincerely hope it achieves its intended purpose and leads to safer workplaces and safer communities. In the meantime, I will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure we’re doing all we can to prevent occupational assaults and ensure the safety of workers.

Sincerely,

Representative Willy Chotzen, House District 46 — Southeast Portland

