

Testimony Before the Senate Committee on Workforce
SB 1040: Rural Oregon Worker Protection Act
April 5, 2017 3:00PM

Chair Taylor, members of the Committee, my name is Maurice Rahming and I am one of the owners of O'Neill Electric. I want to thank the Committee for letting me speak on this very important issue, and in support of SB 1040, the Rural Oregon Worker Protection Act

As a small business owner, I find it extremely valuable both for the workforce and the contractor to have highly skilled professionals. As a company, we pride ourselves in our ability to deliver high quality projects for our clients and we rely on the highly-trained union members of IBEW Local 48. Our union partners are the main training agent for apprentices in their craft to understand the responsibilities and expectations of the worksite, how to ensure the installations are done safely and correctly, and are up to local, state, and federal codes in order to ensure a high-quality lasting product. All of this costs the taxpayers nothing and is jointly funded between the contractors and unions.

This collaborative approach between the contractor and the union makes good business sense:
It allows us to:

- Strengthen apprenticeship programs
- Ensure High quality work
- Depend on a collective investment
- Provides better overall outcomes for all parties

We're here to talk about a very simple bill, SB 1040, that just ensures ongoing consistency in private sector labor relations as it relates to union security agreements, but on a personal note, I have worked in "Right to Work" states in the past, and in my experience, you had to look out for yourself as it pertains to both safety on the job, and there was a lack of consistency of quality on the job, people's knowledge of the work needing to be done had massive variations. This created additional costs to the owner or the end user, numerous errors in installation, lawsuits, workforce being unlicensed to perform the work and did not have proper supervision, injuries were more prominent and damage to equipment.

By passing this simple bill, we can ensure that no corner of our state ends up in a "race to the bottom" like my experience in other states has shown. We value our workforce and the strong relationship we have with our union partners, and we want to ensure that this strong relationship is able to continue in every corner of the state in order for us to continue to provide our clients the best service and project delivery possible. This is part of our company's guiding values and we would hate to have that compromised.

In our sector, when a job is done incorrectly the entire workforce is put in a dangerous position, and the general public is too. That's why I support the SB 1040, the Rural Oregon Worker Protection Action and urge you to as well.

Thank you,
Maurice Rhaming
Co-Owner O'Neill Electric