



Dear Editor and Oregonians,

We here in Oregon have recently been riveted by a story about a teacher in Medford who was carrying a concealed weapon in her classroom. To date the debate has raged on about the rights of gun owners to carry a licensed and permitted weapon on school grounds. I would like us to take this opportunity to refocus the question.

This teacher has begun carrying a concealed weapon because, as a victim of domestic violence, she fears for her life.

We know that domestic violence doesn't stay home when a victim goes to work.

Why is that? For starters the workplace is likely to be the one place a batterer knows to find the victim.

Beyond that, victims report an inability to concentrate on their work, they report being preoccupied with the abuse and report that many times the place they are most likely to disclose their abuse is at work.

Did you know that 70% of victims of domestic violence **HERE IN OREGON** are employed at the time of the abuse. And that 89% of batterers are employed at the time they perpetrate their crime.

So if you think domestic violence is not an issue for the state's Labor Commissioner, think again.

I am launching a program here at the Bureau of Labor and Industries that addresses the rights and responsibilities of employers. My goal is to train employers to recognize the signs of abuse, to know who to contact in a crisis, and to understand what their responsibilities are under the law.

Workplace safety should be a high priority for all employers – and we at BOLI will do everything we can to bring the needed information to employers about this important topic.

Let this situation be your call to action.

When we have victims of violence and sexual assault right here in Oregon who are *afraid to go to work*, who resort to carrying a concealed weapon, then we need to stop and take a serious look at what we doing for those victims.

What are YOU, as an employer, doing?

Do you have a policy on domestic violence in the workplace?

Do you have a safety mitigation plan?

Have you reached out and gotten trainings for you and your employees?

Trainings and materials are available through our agency. Contact us at 971 673 0824 for our Technical Assistance for Employers hotline, register for our Employment Law Conference on December 5th and 6th where we will host a three hour panel with the state's top Domestic Violence experts, or get online at www.oregon.gov/boli to find out more about what you can do to help victims of Domestic Violence in YOUR workplace.

Sincerely,

Dan Gardner, Labor Commissioner