

WORKERS' COMPENSATION
MANAGEMENT-LABOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Full Committee Meeting

Mar. 31, 2025

1 p.m.–1:30 p.m.

Committee members present via zoom:

Scott Strickland, Sheet Metal Workers Local #16

Patrick Priest, Citycounty Insurance Services

Sara Duckwall, Duckwall Fruit

Ryan Hearn, Roseburg Forest Products

Stacy Lewallen, Fortis Construction, Inc.

Sarah Merrick, City of Salem Fire Department

Kim Schlessinger, Samaritan Health Services (**Absent**)

Lorne Bulling, IronWorkers Local 29

Margaret Weddell, Labor Representative

Emily Rivas, Oregon Nurses Association

Andrew Stolfi, DCBS Director, *ex officio* (**Absent**)

Staff:

Teri Watson, MLAC Committee Administrator

Megan Parsons, MLAC Assistant

Baaba Ampah, MLAC Assistant

Agenda Item	Discussion
Opening (00:00:00)	Affirmation and Roll Call Co-Chair Patrick Priest called the meeting to order, and shared an affirmation. Teri Watson called the roll of members. A quorum was present.
 (00:02:15)	Public Comments No public comment
 (00:03:26)	Unfinished Business: SB 606 -American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) David Lynch, Oregon State Hospital (OSH), testified in support of SB 606 .
(00:06:55)	Co-Chair Strickland commented on the similarities between the population served at the OSH, Stabilization and Crisis Unit (SACU), and Department of Correction (DOC), noting that DOC has the PTSD presumption while OSH and SACU do not. He asked for confirmation if SB 606 was specifically seeking to add OSH and SACU employees to the existing presumptions of DOC. Odalis Aguilar-Aguilar, AFSCME, agreed.

-
- (00:08:40) Sara Duckwall asked for clarification on David Lynch's comment about the workers' compensation system not working and invalidating workers. David Lynch explained that despite doing more acute and dangerous work compared to corrections staff, OSH employees do not receive the same PTSD presumption. He also described issues with the workers' compensation system, highlighting that OSH workers are often hesitant to file claims due to anticipated scrutiny of personal history and frequent denials, sharing a story of a worker's physical assault and PTSI claim denial.
- (00:11:33) To Co-chair Priest's question, David Lynch explained that due to the fear of personal history being scrutinized, he was nervous to apply for a workers' compensation PTSI claim. Co-chair Strickland asked for clarification if he was hesitant to apply for a PTSI claim because of the reputation of how claims are treated. David Lynch agreed.
- (00:13:38) Ryan Hearn expressed respect and compassion for OSH and SACU workers. He noted that SB 606 shifts the burden of proof from the employee to the employer. Ryan Hearn mentioned that mental health conditions are subjective and can have multiple root causes, requiring complex medical determinants making it difficult to clearly establish workplace causation. Although supportive of worker safety, he felt that SB 606 was not the right solution.
- (00:15:34) Sarah Merrick refuted that there are studies showing acute PTSI injuries can be directly linked to assaults and traumatic incidents that unexpectedly occur in the workplace.
- (00:16:06) Margaret Weddell commented that SB 606 does not mean automatic acceptance of PTSI claims, but rather shifts the burden to the employers. Employers still have all the tools to investigate and litigate claims. She also noted that similar presumptions already exist for correction workers, so it makes sense to extend it to state hospital workers. Margaret Weddell expressed support for SB 606.
- (00:17:42) Odalis Aguilar-Aguilar commented on AFSCME's commitment to improve workplace safety, actively participating in multiple workgroups, and committees focused on patient and worker safety. She shared the work done by AFSCME with the Governor's recommended budget. Odalis-Aguilar-Aguilar stressed that SB 606 is one part of a broader effort, not a standalone solution. David Lynch added that AFSCME has worked in collaboration with OSH leadership and Service Employees International Union (SEIU) to maximize workgroups on the stressors on workers given the current work conditions.
- (00:21:19) Sara Duckwall asked David Lynch if he felt that his employer is doing everything possible to improve safety, or if the issues at the state hospital were inherently situational and high-risk. David responded that the employer and hospital leadership are doing everything within their power and the law, working alongside AFSCME and SEIU.
-

-
- (00:22:27) Sara Duckwall asked about an article that mention a fear of OSH losing accreditation due to “serious threat to public, and patient health and safety”. David Lynch responded that it seems too fresh and cannot provide additional details. However, OSH has been in the paper for the past couple of years due to issues. There is a lot of changes, specifically the psychiatric intensive care unit.
- (00:25:23) Teri Watson noted that AFSCME has a hearing tomorrow morning at 8:00am, so they would like a vote today.
- (00:25:57) Miles Palacios, Chief of Staff to Senator Campos, commented that SB 606 adds SACU and OSH employees to existing terms similar to corrections officers. He highlighted the volatility and risks in these work environments, noting the necessity of continuing discussions on guardrails and root causes. He noted the belief of Senator Campos is to support the population that experiences violence in the workplace.
- (00:29:02) Keith Semple, OTLA, mentioned that OTLA supports SB 606, for the reasons Margaret Weddell outlined. The presumptions do not eliminate the ability to challenge the diagnosis or causation, but deters the employer from using anything to deny the claim.
- (00:29:36) A brief caucus was taken.
- (00:31:01) Sarah Merrick made a motion for MLAC to support SB 606, and Ryan Hearn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- SB 705 -2**
- (00:31:38) Co-chair Priest moved that MLAC recommend the legislature not support SB 705, and Co-chair Strickland seconded the motion. Co-chair Strickland clarified that there needs to be more work on SB 705 in a subcommittee, and that he is in support of the concept, but the timing is not right. Co-chair Priest reiterated Co-chair Strickland’s statement, mentioning that the topic is on the workplan and MLAC is committed to it, however, SB 705 is not ready for MLAC support at this time.
- (00:32:56) The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Co-chair Priest adjourned the meeting at 1:50 p.m.
Adjourned

*These minutes include time stamps from the meeting video found here:

<https://youtu.be/xguSJe71768>

**Referenced documents can be found on the MLAC Meeting Information page here:

<https://www.oregon.gov/DCBS/mlac/Pages/2025-meetings.aspx>