

anonymous anonymous  
Portland  
LD 1554

I live in Portland and work in the restaurant industry here. I write in support of LD 1554, An Act to Require Sexual Harassment Prevention Training for Restaurant Employees.

I have supervised workers in a workplace where a member of management sexually harassed front of house staff. That manager's behavior caused our front of house team to experience confusion, feel disgust, mistrust workplace leadership, and lose faith in the integrity of the workplace. Because it was a manager who committed the harassment, the power differential made addressing the issue especially challenging, and implicated other management in having fostered a workplace culture lacking in respect and standards of ethics. Not only were the workers on my team failed by this manager, but they then faced the burden of having to challenge workplace management culture in order to stand up for their rights as workers – the very work that management themselves should have been doing in their roles as workplace leaders.

It should come as no surprise that a workplace that allows sexual harassment to occur would also overlook other workers' rights concerns. In my case, I found that the manager who sexually harassed our front of house staff also exhibited extremely poor judgment and deficient management skills when confronted with a separate workplace problem that had arisen under his leadership. He exploited the inherent power differential to justify communicating with me in a demeaning and degrading way, and made a show of retaliatory withholding of workplace information in response to me. A workplace that supports a disrespectful, unprofessional, and harmful manager -- or a harasser of any rank -- shows its staff that it does not uphold its workers' rights, despite what the law might say. Without a law mandating that restaurants and bars provide sexual harassment training for staff, how many other workers will do as I ultimately did, and decide to quit their jobs in protest of abuses of power, despite the heavy financial and social losses such a move entails?

Restaurant and bar workers deserve to work free from the threat and harm of sexual harassment, without having to risk their jobs or their own welfare to assert that right in the face of resistance or lack of mandated workplace training.

Thank you.