

Members of the House Business and Labor Committee;

Thank you for your hard work on behalf of Oregonians, including survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

Please **support HB 2903** to close a gap in protection for victims of violence who need to take reasonable unpaid time off work to seek safety.

**A victim's ability to leave work to address critical needs may be the difference between them getting help and staying safe, or not.** In our community Jane was rebuilding her life, she had just started a new job through a temp agency, her abuser knew that he was losing control and the violence escalated. She was afraid to seek a restraining order because she feared that she would lose her job. Jane worked with a CCWRC Advocate who helped her talk to her employer and accompanied her to court to seek the protection order. Jane and her son are safe and she has been offered a permanent position with the company.

Economic independence is a primary indicator of whether a victim will be able to maintain safety from abuse. When a victim needs to take steps to stay safe, it is critical that she or he not delay, as such violence poses serious public health and safety issues and can even be fatal.

Many service providers – such as law enforcement, courts, attorneys and medical providers – only schedule appointments during business hours, meaning that victims must take time off from work in order to access these services. **Under current law, part-time and new employees do not qualify for protection, leaving some employees who are victims vulnerable to safety threats and posing a risk to the workplace as a whole.**

HB 2903 would close a gap in protection to allow all victims the right to take reasonable time off if necessary to seek court or law enforcement protection, medical care, or other safety measures.

Sincerely,  
Rachael Barry-Dame