

April 5, 2013
House Health Care Committee

Subject: HB 3403

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ken Gerlitz, a Licensed Blind Vendor. I am opposed to HB 3403. For our legislature to dictate what food products we can or cannot offer in our vending machines may be the end of the blind vending program as Oregon currently knows it today.

Personally, I believe that this should be considered desperate and unfair treatment and may even hinge on the boundaries of discrimination. To restrict our sales to certain "healthy products" and then to allow our competitors to sell these same prohibited products with no restrictions, makes no reasonable sense.

It appears that this same battle arises every two years or so, As a result, we are forced to expend a great deal of our financial resources to fight this same war. Once again, I believe that a great deal of this problem stems from a misunderstanding of what are products currently consist of and why we can't offer more healthy foods in our snack machines today. Wouldn't it be better to utilize these funds to increase our employment opportunities today?

The vending industry has made a lot of changes over the past ten years. Many of these changes include offering more healthy food products to our customers.

Today, a manager can sit at their desk and determine what is going on with each and every piece of vending equipment. New Computer technology allows for a manager to sit in their office to evaluate and analyze what is happening with each piece of their vending equipment at any point of time. However, like any other trade, this equipment is very expensive and we are only able to utilize it in very profitable locations. Managers can look at such items as:

- What products are selling?
- What products are not selling?
- What products are running low and need refilled?
- What products need a price increase?
- What machines require service?

This is just a sample of the power and capacity of each of these machines but like anything else today, these machines are very expensive and the products inside must sell to justify the cost of modernization.

However, to continue placing unrealistic demands on vending, will only destroy an industry that has employed thousands of people in Oregon over the years.

Most of the jobs in vending are good paying. Although some of the jobs have been replaced with high tech, somebody still has to drive the trucks, transport the product, and service the vending machines that hold and cool our products.

Remember, if it sells, we are more than happy to sell it. Please, "Don't throw out the baby with the bath water." This is what the passage of HB 3403 will do if passed. Vote No on HB 3403.

Thanks Again,

Ken Gerlitz, Vending Route Manager
Oregon Business Enterprise Program - (541) 779-0504