

April 5, 2013

ATTN: House Health Care Committee

RE: *Opposition to HB 3403*

Chair Greenlick and Committee Members:

My name is Lewanda Miranda. I am a Licensed Blind Vendor. I feel that if House Bill 3403 passes I might be completely out of business, based on past experience. My vending route is the only means available to me for gainful employment in Eastern and Central Oregon through the Oregon Commission for the Blind.

We, the Licensed Blind Vendors of Oregon, have been through the healthy vending mandates before with Governor Kulongoski and an Executive Order attempt. At that time I heard from a lot of State employees, who were very troubled that they would have their choices removed – which I agree with. These are adults who work in a public building, who can make their own choices, and please make no mistake, they will. All they have to do is go to the nearest convenience store to obtain the food and/or beverage products they desire, or bring it from home. This is discriminatory that these limitations are only for vending machines, thus disabling myself, and my fellow colleagues in the Business Enterprise Program from competitive business afforded to other merchants.

I have been a successful blind business woman for the past 16 years. If selling only healthy snacks in my vending machines were profitable, you can bet that is what I would be selling. However, based on past experience it does not sell. I currently have 40% healthy choices in my vending machines now, and a lot of it is wasted, again because it doesn't sell. Therefore, it becomes outdated, and I have to throw it away as lost revenue to my business.

I hope this helps you to see that if House Bill 3403 passes this will not be in the best interest of taxpaying blind business owners and State workers who should be entitled to choice. Presently, there is a national unemployment rate among blind individuals of 70%, please do not make your decision to increase the already too high unemployment rate by placing me in the unemployment line.

Respectfully,

Lewanda Miranda
Prineville, Oregon