

The **MAIN STREET**
Alliance of Oregon

MEASURE: HB 3390
EXHIBIT: 24
H BUSINESS & LABOR
DATE: 4-3-2013 PAGES: 1
SUBMITTED BY: Bill Dickey

April 3, 2013

To: House Business and Labor Committee
From: Jim Houser, Hawthorne Auto Clinic & Co-chair, Main Street Alliance of Oregon
Re: Support of HB 3390

Chair Doherty and committee members,

My name is Jim Houser and my wife and I own and operate Hawthorne Auto Clinic in SE Portland. I am also co-chair of Main Street Alliance of Oregon. I, and Main Street Alliance, support HB 3390, a bill to create a statewide earned sick leave standard in Oregon

Let me tell you about small business's stake in this earned sick time campaign. Hawthorne Auto Clinic is celebrating its 30th anniversary this month, so I think I know a thing or two about small business success.

Our principle business asset, next to our customers, is our employees. I believe, and experience has borne me out, that if you take care of your employees they will take care of you. We provide good benefits, including earned sick days - now called personal days - and have for all of our 30 years. Not counting our 3 student interns recently promoted to full-time, the average tenure of our other 8 full-time employees is 20 years. That kind of employee loyalty is critical to the success of any small business.

Most small business people understand this basic business reality. The biggest hurdle small business owners face in being able to provide decent wages and benefits is competition with national chains, like McDonalds and Wal-Mart, who are notorious for driving down the cost of labor (i.e. suppressing wages and benefits). As much as they would like to, small business owners are often trapped by the power of the multinationals.

Because I realize there is some anxiety among business owners who fear employees will abuse their sick time, I inventoried our employee's personal day usage over the past year. One half of our staff (5 people) used all 5 days last year (for a hip replacement, new baby, flu, etc.). The other half of my employees used 0 - 1 days, for an average of 2.7 personal days overall for the whole year.

Reasonable employment standards such as we now have in Portland, and is proposed as a statewide standard in HB 3390, level the business playing field by requiring all employers to play by the same rules. This enables small business owners to do what they know needs to be done, like providing earned sick time for employees, for their enterprises to thrive.

We urge you to support HB 3390.

Thank you.