

April 3, 2013

Oregon House Business and Labor Committee

Dear Chair Doherty and Committee Members,

I am writing to ask your support for HB 3390, which would provide workers with an hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours they are on the job. This bill would be an excellent first step toward requiring employers to fairly compensate their employees, regardless of their employment classification, and provide peace of mind to those who worry each day about the possible financial impact caused by an illness.

I have been with my employer since 1998, as both a full-time and part-time employee. Currently, I am classified as a part-time employee and budgeted to work no more than 12 hours a week. The reality is, I work much more than that — closer to full-time. I am allowed to work up to 40 hours a week, if necessary, but usually average 32 hours each week. Because of my “part-time” status, I am extended no benefits regardless of the hours I put in.

My situation is unique — my kids are raised, my husband has retired and I am able to work from home if I am under the weather. Some of my co-workers, however, do not have that luxury. They are single parents, who work fluctuating hours like I do, but as classified part-time employees, they receive no benefits. They lack the portability of a job like mine, and to them, lost wages due to their own illness or that of their child, is a hardship. Being the sole breadwinner for your family is hard enough. No one should be expected, or asked, to compromise their health for their job.

HB 3390 would also require employers to treat their employees equally where their health and the overall health of the workplace is concerned. My company offered flu shots earlier this season. Workers who carried company medical coverage were first in line, followed by their dependents, if they were also enrolled in the plan. The rest of us, who are denied access to the medical plan because of our employment status, were stuffed at the back of the line and charged \$15 for the vaccine. What that told me, was that my employer didn't value my contribution to the company enough to help me protect my health and that of those around me.

Instead of considering only the bottom dollar of their business, employers need to be concerned with the health and welfare of the very employees producing that bottom dollar. HB 3390 would prevent employers from forcing their workers to choose between their health, their family's health and their job.

I encourage you to support this bill and the fundamental rights that should be extended to all workers.

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