

May 8, 2013

**Testimony to Senate Committee on General Government,  
Consumer and Small Business Protection**

Re: Support for HB 3160A- Putting insurance industry under Unfair Trade Practices Act

Chair Shields and Committee Members,

My name is Lee Mercer. I am a business owner and a member of the Executive Team of the Main Street Alliance of Oregon. We are a statewide network of small business owners speaking out on issues impacting businesses and our communities. We currently have over 1200 business owners on our roster.

We recently sent an e-mail poll out to our statewide leadership group asking if they would support or oppose a bill to give the Attorney General the power to sue insurance companies that engage in fraud, noting that this is the only line of business exempt from the state's Unfair Trade Practice Act. Of those responding, 96% would support such a bill. It is rare to see this kind of consensus among our membership.

In this e-survey, and in conversations with business owners throughout the state, we have heard a long litany of complaints about insurance companies. These are often, but not always, centered on the challenges of getting affordable health insurance coverage as well as various practices of insurance companies.

We hear complaints about insurance companies not paying claims, denying coverage for losses, failing to evaluate claims in good faith and delaying processing and payment of claims. With my health insurance provider, as a minor example, I have been calling monthly to get a simple annual physical bill paid. As of last week, this routine bill is still unpaid 10 months after the service was rendered by my physician in Silverton.

Among many comments made by business owners in our recent e-survey, this one seems to sum up small business owners feelings: *"The insurance industry has gone unregulated for way too long and they appear to have little interest in regulating themselves. It's time to make them live in the real world like the rest of us."*

Main Street Alliance of Oregon recommends a yes vote on HB 3160A.

Thanks for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours Respectfully,



Lee Mercer, Main Street Alliance of Oregon