



Chair Garrett, members of the committee, my name is Leslie Lindberg-Harper and I am an instructional assistant in the Salem-Keizer school district.

As an educator I know first-hand that healthy kids learn better. When a kid comes to school sick they can't focus, they recover from the illness slower, they get their fellow students and staff sick.

For too many parents, staying home to care for a sick child means losing needed pay or even risking losing their job.

We see students we come to school sick all the time because their parents would lose their jobs if they missed work. Sometimes, a sick child does stay home but their older sibling has to also stay home to take care of younger, sick sibling. All of these solutions are disruptive to the kids' health and the learning environment at school. Teachers and school staff have to focus energy on keeping kids comfortable instead of on teaching. Being at school sick is not restful for the children, and they do not come to school ready to learn.

Research shows low-wage workers are less likely to have access to paid sick leave. This forces many parents to make an impossible decision between earning a pay check or caring for a sick child. We need to take steps to make sure they can do both – while removing a learning barrier for low-income students.

Research also shows that a parent's care helps kids recover more quickly. Yet right now, only some parents have that option. Nationally, more than half of working parents don't have even a few paid sick days to care for a sick child. And we know that matters, because research shows that parents without paid sick time are twice as likely to send a sick child to school than parents who do earn paid sick time at work. The inequitable impact on the low-income kids in our schools is clear.

Our students learn better when they're healthy. The HB 3390 is a common-sense proposal that will make it easier for our parents to care for their sick children – without jeopardizing their economic security. No parent should be forced to send a sick child to school or leave them home alone because they can't afford to miss a day's work. We can and should fix this for our students and families!

On behalf of the Oregon Education Association and educators from around the state we ask that you support HB 3390 and the -2 amendments. Thank you for your time.

*Working wonders for public education*