



June 5, 2013

Re: HB 3390-2 Amendment

To Chair Garrett and the members of the House Committee on Rules:

Board Members
Paige Sipes-Metzler
Nicola Pinson
Rian Moore
Carlos Crespo
Jack Friedman
Bruce Goldberg
Molly Haynes
S. Marie Harvey
Sami Jarrah
Richard Lowensohn
Ken Van Osdol
Anne Phillipsborn
Jennifer Pratt

The Oregon Public Health Institute, a non-profit agency dedicated to improving community health through policy and system change, appreciates the opportunity to share its perspective with you today as you consider this very important health policy. As one of a national network of public health institutes, OPHI assists policy makers to make good decisions by describing the impact a proposed action will have on public health. OPHI supports HB 3390 as amended by the -2 amendments (HB 3390).

HB 3390 is essential to creating a culture of health in Oregon. Rising health care costs have made employee wellness an economic imperative for employers across the U.S. Comprehensive worksite wellness programs contain health care costs, decrease absenteeism, improve employee morale, cut the number and cost of workers' compensation claims, and help attract and retain healthy employees. When employees are sick, they need time to take charge of their health.

Our service economy has left many workers with no right to any kind of leave, paid or unpaid. This group includes most food service workers, and the vast majority of people in the care-taking occupations that we depend on when we are sick, and entrust with our children and elders: home health aides, nursing home employees, hospital aides, child care workers. When these workers get sick, many employers will find a way to accommodate them, but there are unfortunately many other employers who will not. A person who must report to work when she is ill will not recover as quickly and can spread illness to her co-workers and others. A person who stays home when she, or one of her family members, is ill will incur pay loss and risk job loss. Pay or job loss is destabilizing to the worker and the worker's family. If the worker lives like so many of us do, paycheck to paycheck, pay loss or job loss could put her housing in jeopardy and lead to further problems that will ripple out into the broader community.

OPHI urges this committee to provide leadership towards a culture of health. The current proposal makes good sense. It strikes the right balance between the legitimate health needs of an employee, and the employer's interest in having a healthy, productive workforce it can count on.

Respectfully submitted,

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