



## Urban League of Portland

### Testimony in Support of HB 3390 with the -2 Amendments

June 5, 2013

House Rules Committee

Ty Schwoeffermann

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Urban League of Portland

Chair Garrett and Members of the House rules Committee;

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Urban League of Portland in support of HB 3390 with the -2 amendments. My name is Ty Schwoeffermann, I am with the Urban League of Portland and the Paid Sick Time Coalition and I'm here to support the - (dash) 2 amendments to HB 3390 which would allow most Oregon employees to earn paid sick time.

The Urban League support this bill not only because it will benefit all working Oregonians, but because a high proportion of African Americans, 44% or women and nearly 50% of African American men- are not able to earn a single paid sick day to use to recover from common illnesses. This is an equity priority for the Urban League. When illness strikes, workers have to risk their economic security by staying home, or their health or a family member's health by going to work. For these families, living pay check to pay check losing precious income due to illness is no small matter. And even a few days of lost pay means that they may have to decide between paying the rent and buying groceries or paying their utility bill.

The Urban League receives calls from many of our community members who feel that they have been discriminated and victimized at work. One particular case comes to mind where a woman felt that she wasn't welcome at her work place but was determined to stay. She did everything above and beyond to appease her supervisor; but when she became so ill she had to seek emergency care and was out for two days, she was written up and eventually dismissed. The average unemployed African American worker searches nearly 10 months for a new job. The threat of job loss for taking an unsanctioned sick day is very real:

She actually won her case with BOLI's help, but many have no recourse. No-one should be fired, suspended, written up or penalized by an employer for taking time off from work to care for a sick child or family member, or to cope with an illness.

We urge support and passage of HB 3390 and the -2 amendments.