

February 16, 2015

To: Senate Workforce and House Business and Labor Committees
From: Nick Herinckx & Michael Nierengarten, co-owners, Obility b2b
Re: Support of SB454 and HB2005

Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB 2005 and SB 454.

My name is Michael Nierengarten, I am the founder of Obility, a B-to-B marketing agency located in downtown Portland. And I am Nick Herinckx, co-owner of Obility.

We opened our doors in early 2011, building our services from the ground up. Today, our fast-growing company has a strong team of 13 employees behind us—seasoned experts who provide strategy and excellence to our clients. People often ask us what has contributed to our growth. My answer to them: our talented staff. My team believes in our vision and they are genuinely proud of where they work.

As a start-up, we set out to build our company on a clear vision: doing our best work possible, focusing on efficiency, having fun and ensuring a strong work-life balance. So when it came time to create our employee benefits packages, offering paid sick days was a no-brainer.

We believe that the best way to maintain the quality of our services is to maintain the health of our team, which is why all team members have flexible hours—on top of paid sick days—where they can choose to work wherever they want. A happy and healthy team leads to happy and successful clients.

When people don't have access to paid sick time, they come to work and get everyone else sick, significantly hurting the entire team's performance as well as the company's return on investment (ROI). If my staff show up to work feeling under the weather, our policy is for their manager to ask that they instead work from home as not to get others sick.

HB 2005/SB 454 ensures that all working Oregonians can accrue paid sick time so that they can afford to stay home when they are sick.

As a small business owner, I know my company plays a vital role in our economy. I ask those who oppose this bill: is getting all of your other employees sick good for business? Is getting your customers sick good for business? Do employees who are more stressed increase ROI?

The resounding answer is no. Studies show that without sick days, employees are much more likely to come in to work when they are sick, jeopardizing coworkers' and customers' health and diminishing overall business performance. We know from experience that when sick employees are able to stay home, other team members stay healthier, and less-stressed employees are more productive.

HB 2005/ SB 454 will help keep workplaces healthy and productive and businesses strong. But it's not just good for the economy, it's also good for families.

HB 2005/SB 454 will help keep families financially secure—especially those who are struggling the most—by enabling them to stay home and take care of themselves or a loved one, without forgoing a paycheck or putting their jobs on the line. Every working Oregonian needs a few sick days. No human being should be working when they are really sick.

Like many other successful small businesses, we treat our employees like family. They are not just cogs in a machine. Our staff are human beings, the people who motivate us everyday to come to work, focus, learn and deliver. We depend on them as much as they depend on us.

Please pass HB 2005/SB 454; it makes good business and economic sense and it's the right thing to do for Oregon families.

Thank you.