

February 16, 2015

To: Senate Workforce and House Business and Labor Committees  
From: Avery Leinova  
Re: Support of SB454 and HB2005

Dear Chairs Dembrow and Holvey and Committee Members,

My name is Avery Leinova and I live and work in Portland. I am excited about this opportunity to share my views on SB454 and HB2005. I am submitting my testimony in writing because I work on Monday nights, and can not attend the hearing in person.

I have worked at my current job as a dispatcher for a cab company for 15 years, and before that I drove a cab for seven years, mostly with one company. But even after all that time, until Portland's paid sick time law went into effect last year, I only got paid sick leave after I'd already been out sick for three days. I can't afford to not get paid for three days, so if I got sick, I took medications to mask the symptoms, and I went to work sick. It's hard to get better this way but I had no choice because I can't afford to lose a day's wages.

Two winters ago, when I caught the chest cold that was going around, I had to work. It was difficult to answer phones when I could barely talk, with coughing fits that lasted up to five minutes. Not to mention all the germs I was spreading. Had I had sick time from the first day of my illness, I could have stayed home and gotten over the worst of it before returning to work.

And it wasn't just me. Where I work, lots of people came to work sick because they couldn't afford to stay home. There are single parents and families for whom missing a day's wages means going without food. This isn't right. Everyone needs to be able to take paid sick leave when they're sick – on the first day they're sick.

Fortunately, in Portland, we now have access to paid sick time on the first day we're sick. Just a few weeks ago, I had the flu and laryngitis and I missed a whole week of work – without losing any pay. It made a huge difference that I was able to stay home and rest when I needed to, without losing a week's wages and without fear.

The working people all over Oregon want and need paid sick days. I hope you will act on behalf of us all by supporting SB454 and HB2005.