

Date: February 16, 2015

To: Senate Workforce and House Business and Labor Committees

From: Linda Seymour, MSW, LCSW (OR 1683)

Re: Support of SB454 and HB2005

Dear Chairs Dembrow and Holvey and Committee Members:

My name is Linda Seymour, and I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker currently in private practice. I worked for 25 years in a private non-profit agency providing mental health services to children and their under- or marginally employed parents. Every day I saw the impact of chronic financial stress on my clients. Few of them had the benefit of paid sick leave.

Many of us do not experience that stress. We have had the good fortune of good enough genes, good enough role models, good enough health, good enough educations. We have good enough jobs with good enough benefits.

This quiz will help you better understand the lives of the families I've served, the people without such good fortune. Please put yourself in these shoes for a moment, and pick the best option available to you, without paid sick leave:

1. You are a single parent. Your child wakes up this morning, vomiting, with 102 fever. Your choices:
 - A. Send her--probably contagious-- to school
 - B. Leave her home alone, or
 - C. Forfeit 8 hours of pay at your \$9.10/hr job. Your electric bill will have to wait.

Which option would you choose?

2. Your 10 year old son who had been sexually molested at his daycare center at age 4, has gotten in trouble at school for making inappropriate gestures and comments. The school counselor recommends an 8 week treatment group, to head off further problems. You will miss one hour of work every Monday afternoon for two months. If you don't lose your job for simply requesting the time off, it'll cost you \$80 in much needed family income, plus gas money to get there. Choose from two options:
 - A. Risk your job, take the financial hit, and get your kid the treatment he needs; or
 - B. Skip the group and hope for the best.

3. You have a family history of breast cancer. You discover a lump. You get to the doctor by skipping lunch. The doctor says come back for a mammogram. Your boss was not happy the last time you needed to make a medical appointment during work hours, and warned you not to "push your luck."
 - A. You "push your luck" and make the appointment, figuring your life is more important than your job.
 - B. You "push your luck" and don't make the appointment, figuring you need the job, and hoping it's nothing anyway. You'll make the appointment if the lump gets bigger.

What do you choose?

Nobody should be forced to make decisions like these. Nobody. Do the right thing: Support these bills. Thank you.

Linda Seymour MSW, LCSW