



NAACP
Eugene ~ Springfield Branch
www.NAACPLaneCounty.org

February 16, 2015

To: Senate Workforce and House Business and Labor Committees
From: Eric Richardson, President, Eugene-Springfield Branch of the NAACP
Re: Support of SB454 and HB2005

Dear Chairs Dembrow and Holvey and Committee Members,

One of many great things about living in Oregon is the real effort so many of us make to create a state where everyone is valued. But there are times when we must take action and make changes to improve the lives of working people.

In my home town of Eugene last year, our policy leaders did the right thing and passed the inclusive sick days policy we need and deserve. Before them, Portland ensured most workers there had paid sick time, too. Now you have an opportunity to take a step forward for our friends and neighbors who don't have access to paid sick time where they work, all across Oregon.

We must stand up together for those who are less likely to have access to paid sick time and are more challenged by not having it than others: people of color, low-wage workers, and single parents.

Many of these neighbors have no choice but to work sick when the inevitable illness arises, or when they have a sick child, because they aren't able to take even a single day off. This leads to very real repercussions for these families, and for our entire state.

For too many folks, even just one or two days of lost pay can equal that month's grocery bill, or the tank of gas that gets them to their job. This is especially true for families of color. In our state, 30% of Latinos, African-Americans and Native Americans are living in poverty, something that makes sick days integral to helping families get out of poverty, and can help keep others from the brink.

Sick days are just one important way we can increase equity, improve economic security, and make the workplace more fair and just for all.

Don't let this opportunity to make real change pass by. Commitment calls for action. If we are truly a state that values our people then we must support paid sick days for all.

This is an important moment in our history. You can help to remove this barrier to success for working families, improve public well-being, and ensure that *all* people have the same opportunities to care for themselves and their families; to be healthy, safe, and to have dignity at work.

Sincerely,

Eric Richardson
President
NAACP, Eugene-Springfield Branch