



To: Senate Workforce Committee and House Business and Labor Committee
Date: Feb. 16, 2015
RE: Support for SB 454 and HB 2005

The Oregon Education Association, representing over 42,000 educators, supports SB 454 and HB 2005, creating a system of paid sick days for working families in Oregon.

Teachers and education support professionals see first-hand the negative effects of Oregon's current lack of paid sick days. They see students who attend school while sick, and they see students miss school to take care of a sibling or other family member because their working parents would lose their job if they took time off work. Research shows that parents without paid sick time are twice as likely to send a sick child to school as parents who do earn paid sick time at work.

Children missing school and children attending school while sick are both disruptive to the health and the learning environment at school. Teachers and school staff have to focus energy on keeping kids comfortable instead of on teaching. Being at school sick does not allow children to come to school ready to learn.

Educators know first-hand that healthy kids learn better. When a child comes to school sick they can't focus, they recover from the illness slower and they risk infecting school staff and fellow students with the disease.

Research shows low-wage workers are less likely to have access to paid sick days. This forces many parents to make an impossible decision between earning a pay check and caring for a sick child. We need to take steps to make sure they can do both.

Students learn better when they're healthy. Implementing paid sick days in Oregon is a common-sense idea whose time has come. No parent should be forced to send a sick child to school or leave them home alone because they can't afford to miss a day's work. This year we have a chance to fix this problem in Oregon.

On behalf of the Oregon Education Association and educators from around the state we ask that you support SB 454 and HB 2005 to finally give working parents access to paid sick days.