

February 16, 2015

To: Senate Workforce and House Business and Labor Committees

From: Kelly Nichols,

1st/2nd Grade Teacher,

Portland Public Schools

Re: Support of SB454 and HB2005

Dear Chairs Dembrow and Holvey and Committee Members,

My name is Kelly Nichols and I am a 1st and 2nd grade teacher with Portland Public Schools. Thanks you for the opportunity to submit testimony to you tonight.

As a teacher, I see first-hand what a cold or the flu can do to a classroom full of kids. I know that when one of my students gets sick, what's best for them is to stay home and rest up. Unfortunately not every student is able to do that.

When a parent doesn't have paid sick days at work and their child gets sick, they're forced to make a choice between staying home with their child and losing pay, or sending their child to school anyway so that they can go to work and earn the money they need to provide for their family. That's a hard choice, and many times, as I've seen over the years, when a parent doesn't have paid sick days, they'll decide that they have to send their child to school because there's no one at home to take care of their child. When these kids come into the classroom sick, the cycle just keeps repeating itself, with more sick kids, and more sick parents, and more parents having to decide whether they can afford to stay home or if they have to send their child to school sick.

Oregonians have got to know and understand that this is a real problem. Forcing hardworking parents to make a choice between taking care of their children and being able to provide for their children is impossible and unfair.

Every Oregonian should get paid sick days, please pass SB454 and HB2005.

Thank you again for your attention.