

February 16, 2015

To: Senate Workforce and House Business and Labor Committees  
From: Mitch Rofsky, President, Better World Club  
Re: Support of SB454 and HB2005

Dear Chairs Dembrow and Holvey and Committee Members,

Thank you for your consideration on this important matter. My name is Mitch Rofsky, I am the President of Better World Club. We currently have 7 employees in Oregon. Better World Club, the nation's only eco-friendly auto club, is dedicated to balancing economic goals with social and environmental responsibility. I support SB 454 & HB 2005, creating a statewide paid sick days standard.

As a business person, there is one economics lesson I learn over and over again: The marketplace is essential but not perfect. It is not perfect in a variety of ways, but a big one is that not everyone can be a winner. I don't mean winner in the sense of Bill Gates or Warren Buffett. Rather, a winner in the sense of middle class—with access to some discretionary income.

There are a surprising number of jobs where skills aren't distinctive and basic benefits are not provided. No matter how well or hard one works in those jobs, middle-class wages and benefits are not available. One of the missing benefits is paid sick days.

A more perfect marketplace would consider the personal issues that enable workers to excel at their jobs. After all, if they or a family member is sick, and they do what is necessary for the family, they risk losing a paycheck—or even their job. This kind of pressure keeps them from being as productive as they can be. Even worse, in the food industry where skills are often low and benefits non-existent, this could lead to employees working when they are sick: Infecting the customers...and the business.

When the marketplace is imperfect, there is only one institution that can fix it: the government. That's why Oregon needs HB 2005/SB 454.

Is this a burden on business? Only if a business provides the added benefits but its competitors do not. But when all employers in the state offer such standards, it is not a burden but a benefit—for all. Healthier employees add to the bottom line through reduced turnover and training costs—and more productive employees.

In fact, we believe that low-cost fixes, such as having all employers offer paid sick days for every job, can play a significant role in building a more stable middle class—increasing the number of marketplace winners.

Any business owner can tell you: When workers are happy, businesses do better. If Oregon wants to help businesses grow, it should pass HB 2005/SB 454. Businesses, employees—and the marketplace—will be better for it.

Thank you,  
Mitch Rofsky, Better World Club