

February 16, 2015

To: Senate Workforce and House Business and Labor Committees
From: Marshall Wilde
Re: Support of SB 454 and HB 2005

Dear Chairs Dembrow and Holvey and Committee Members,

My name is Marshall Wilde. I write to encourage you to support paid sick leave for all employees in the State of Oregon. As a parent, a consumer, an attorney, and an employer, paid sick and family leave just makes sense.

Parents know the tough decisions that happen when kids get sick. While FMLA is sometimes available, it is unpaid. Furthermore, the effort necessary to get FMLA is disproportionate to the benefit. Honestly, as the husband of a pediatrician, I know that the last thing a pediatrician wants is a kid who is not seriously ill coming into their offices and infecting healthy children. Also, there's the substantial inconvenience of same day scheduling, and the expense to public and private insurance when kids go unnecessarily to the doctor, just to get a note. A sensible bill that permits family leave for a sick kid with a minimum of documentation would go a long way to reducing unnecessary inconvenience and healthcare expenses, in addition to the obvious benefits of being able to care for one's own sick children and keeping them from infecting other children by sending them to school sick.

Consumers also benefit from paid sick leave. The jobs most likely to lack paid sick leave now are those with the most contact with the public – retailers, restaurant employees, and other customer service representatives. Providing paid sick leave and fining employers who allow obviously sick employees to work with the public will do a lot to reduce the spread of illness. Remember, it wasn't the doctors who beat Ebola in Africa – it was the modification of social norms to reduce transmission of the disease.

As an attorney and employer, paid sick leave protects both employers and the public. As it stands, when an employee spreads illness in the workplace, the employee blames the employer for forcing him or her to work, while the employer blames the employee for not calling in. As a result, the public loses. Paid sick leave resolves this pretty simply by providing a safe harbor for employers to require sick employees to stay home.

In sum, paid sick leave makes sense for Oregon. It benefits the public and business. The primary opponents are businesses who enjoy an unfair competitive advantage by denying paid sick leave, passing the costs in illness on to the public. Please support paid sick leave in Oregon.

Sincerely,



Marshall L. Wilde