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April 2, 2015

The Salem Area Chamber of Commerce
HB 2010 and HB 3377, Relating to Employee Scheduling / Flexible Work Schedules

To Chair Holvey and Members of the House Business & Labor Committee:

The Salem Chamber recently took a position in opposition to House Bill 2010 and we would like to make sure you are aware of our concern for similar reasons with House Bill 3377. Both bills relate to employer / employee relationships and the role of government as a regulator between these parties.

After researching House Bill 3377 it is clear to us that the bill would provide new oversight and authority to the Bureau of Labor and Industries under ORS Chapter 659A. Under the subsection of this chapter, the BOLI Commissioner would have the authority to execute temporary cease and desist orders, levy civil penalties, and other formal charges as it relates to this proposed bill.

Proposed legislation like HB 3377 lead to a growing perception that some in positions of elected leadership are interested in charting new territory whereby employers are suspected guilty based on employee accusations.

We feel this change in philosophy to be very concerning as it relates to business and labor laws being considered this session. Oregon does not need a reputation of being a place where business isn't worth expanding. We need to remember that our neighbors in states around us will have increasing competitive advantage over Oregon if we choose to pass policies that buck the trend of traditional state labor laws in place elsewhere. Employers have freedoms and choices as to where they conduct business. If Oregon is an outlier in regards to labor laws we need to be cognoscente of the reality that those policies can directly drive poverty and social service challenges as job opportunities are realized by our state neighbors and not Oregonians.

Please join us in opposing HB 3377 because of the damaging message it sends to potential Oregon investors as well as current investors. Our most successful job providers take care of their employees and care deeply about their fulfillment in the world of work. Providing new powers and authority to employees through this and other legislation sends a message that our state government doesn't trust those in business, yet, scientific polling continues to showcase the fact that small business owners are one of the most trusted institutions in the United States (behind only the military)*. We do not believe state government needs to expand its interventions in standard Human Resource practices that are central to private business.

Thank you for your important work as part of the House Business and Labor Committee in the 2015 Legislative Session. We hope you join us in opposition to both house bills.

Sincerely,

Chief Executive Officer
Salem Area Chamber of Commerce
Cell Phone: 503-302-5060

*Gallup Poll, Confidence in Institutions, June 5-8, 2014
<http://www.gallup.com/poll/1597/confidence-institutions.aspx>