



Deborah Kafoury
Multnomah County Chair

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May 4, 2015
Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services

Testimony by Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury in support of Senate Bill 454

Dear Co Chairs Bates and Nathanson and members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services,

As the local public health authority, Multnomah County routinely asks people who are sick to stay home from work so they don't spread illness.

Unfortunately 80% of low-income workers statewide have no paid sick days. Seventy four percent of workers in the food service industry do not have paid sick leave.

As a result, many of the people handling food keep working even when they have symptoms of contagious diseases such as a cough, fever, diarrhea, and vomiting.

Working while ill contributes to outbreaks of Norovirus, influenza, and other infectious diseases in our businesses, child care centers, and schools. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that people who went to work while sick with H1N1 in 2009 caused as many as 7 million co-workers to become ill with influenza.

In 2013, I supported Portland's Protected Sick Time Ordinance because it is sound public health policy. A coffee shop employee can work some shifts in Portland, where they are eligible for paid sick time, and some shifts 10 blocks away where they are not. It doesn't make sense – we need a statewide solution.

Many families cannot afford to lose even one day's pay. It is not good for our community, or for business to encourage employees to come to work sick.

Paid sick days are a moral, public health, work-family and labor issue that can benefit businesses and their employees. Paid sick days can help stabilize our fragile economy, helping support employees so that they don't have to make the choice between a paycheck and caring for themselves or their children.

This is a proven solution—in San Francisco, which has had earned paid sick days since 2007, surveys of employers show that profits did not suffer and that the policy was not difficult to implement.

Multnomah County strongly encourages the state to pass Senate Bill 454.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah Kafoury". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deborah Kafoury,
Multnomah County Chair