



FAMILY FORWARD
OREGON

Smart policies for today's families.

June, 4, 2015

Opposition to SB 968 in Senate Committee on Rules

My name is Andrea Paluso, Executive Director of Family Forward Oregon. On principle we are opposed to Senate Bill 968, which would strip local governments of their ability to set policies on matters related to scheduling.

Oregon has a strong tradition of home-rule and of protecting local jurisdictions' ability to settle matters of local concern. Since 1906 localities have had home-rule authority granted explicitly in the Oregon constitution. Local governments have used this authority to set health, safety and workplace standards for their residents and are often at the forefront of setting policy and responding to emerging issues.

Occasionally the state preempts local governments, typically when they set a uniform state standard, but we oppose efforts to tie the hands of local governments where no such statewide standard exists.

A preemption on laws that establish fair scheduling practices is particularly unfortunate. Many low wage and hourly workers in our state are currently unable to predict when they will work, how many hours they will get per week and what kind of paycheck they can expect. This is, in part, because larger employers have increased the use of "just in time" scheduling and other mechanisms to reduce staffing at the cost of employee's well-being and financial stability. But even those who do not use this specific type of scheduling practice often perpetuate workplace standards that assume workers are available on short notice and with limited predictability, and that the employee should bear the financial brunt of slow times with few customers.

With increasing frequency, workers in retail establishments may be placed "on call" without pay, required to be available up to a few hours before a shift only to be told they aren't needed, making it impossible to get a second job or arrange for childcare.

These practices mean that workers often do not know what their monthly income will be, challenging their budgets and their capacity to get ahead. For those workers on the lowest wages, one day of being called off work or sent home early can mean their family doesn't have the money to pay for gas or food. By preventing local governments from acting on this important issue, and without further action by the state to address this issue now, we are allowing for these practices to continue.

Family Forward Oregon generally opposes local preemptions on matters related to worker benefits and protections. However, we recognize that passage of this bill is essential to the overall passage of a bill giving workers paid sick time, which has had a long and robust public discussion and will, in the nearer term, positively impact Oregon's working families.