



Senate Committee on Workforce and General Government
Sami Alloy, Legislative and Policy Director, Oregon Working Families
Testimony on SB 1594
February 16th, 2016

Jeff Anderson, UFCW Local 555
Chair

Cherry Harris, IUOE Local 70
Treasurer

Wesley Buchholz, LiUNA 483

Dawn DesBrisay, ILWU Local 8

Robin Rabiuff, IBEW Local 48

Tom Leedham, Teamsters 206

Ben Nelson, District Council of
Laborers

Stefan Ostrach, UAW

Andrea Paluso, At-Large Member

Shanti Lewallen, ILWU Local 8

Mark Sturbois, CWA 7901

Barbara Dudley
Senior Policy Advisor

Chair Dembrow, members of the committee, thank you for having me. For the record, my name is Sami Alloy. I'm the legislative and policy director of Oregon Working Families. I'm here today to vigorously oppose SB 1594.

Working Families represents 11,000 voters and 30,000 supporters across the state. Our members were deeply supportive of the coalition effort to pass a strong and inclusive paid sick time law for Oregon workers in the 2015 session. We supported paid sick days to ensure that workers are able to take paid time off when they or a family member are ill. This is an important public health measure and a basic right that all workers should be entitled to.

We are proud of Oregon's historic paid sick time law because no one should face losing their job or wages because they or family member are sick. The law took effect on January 1, 2016 and has only just started to benefit the hundreds of thousands of workers in our state who waited far too long for this basic right. SB 1594 represents a substantive policy change to Oregon's paid sick time law that hurts workers and takes money out of their pockets. We oppose any changes to the sick time law that roll back protections for workers. SB 1594 rolls back paid sick time and forces employees on public works projects to pay for the cost of their own sick time.

SB 1594 would allow employers to deduct from an employee's total compensation package the value of paid sick time. This means, in essence, that employees will be paying for the cost of their own sick time. This is contrary to the very intent of PAID sick time. Indeed, what will the many workers who have already started accruing this time do if this right is repealed? Will they have to pay back their employer for any sick time used before this new law would go into effect? What message does this send to hard working Oregonians and the families who rely on them?

Paid sick time should be exactly that--paid time off when an employee or their family member is sick. SB 1594 would take away a right that workers on public works projects have already obtained and goes against the legislative intent of the sick time law.

Protecting all workers, their families, coworkers and consumers from spreading illness



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and disease or losing out on much needed pay is something that this legislature sought to remedy when passing sick time last year.

Public money should not be spent to undercut workers rights or undermine benefits that are required by law. We should do whatever we can to ensure that public money spent on public works projects also benefits our greater economy by protecting workers rights under the law.