



February 16, 2016

RE: In Opposition to Senate Bill 1594

Chair Dembrow, Members of the Committee -

For the record my name is Kevin Billman. I am the Director of Legislative and Community Action for United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 555. I am here to testify in opposition to SB 1594 on behalf of over 20,000 workers in Oregon and Southwestern Washington.

Our union is founded on workers empowering workers to unite and find their voice. Nationally we are made up of more than 1.3 million people working primarily in grocery and retail stores, and in the food processing and meat packing industries. We are a diverse group of workers that have grown into being the largest private sector labor union in Oregon. Together, we are proud to put the food on America's tables.

Our members oppose SB 1594. Our members worked hard with a broad coalition during the 2015 session to pass a strong and inclusive paid sick time law for Oregon workers. This law is meant 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 is a basic right to which all workers should be entitled.

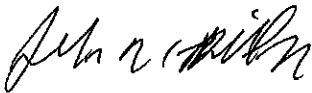
All too often, our members were going to work sick because they couldn't afford to take the time off. We are proud of this new law, which took effect on January 1, 2016 and has only just started to benefit the hundreds of thousands of workers in our state who waited far too long for this basic right.

SB 1594 represents a substantive policy change and an unnecessary roll back to Oregon's historic paid sick time law that hurts workers and takes money out of their pockets. This is not the time to make changes to this new law and we are opposed to any changes to the new sick time law that roll back protections for workers. SB 1594 would roll back paid sick time and force employees on public works projects to pay for the cost of their own sick time.

Paid sick time should be exactly that. Paid time off for when an employee or their family member is sick. This bill allows an employer to deduct the value of sick time from an employee's overall compensation package on public works projects. SB 1594 would take away a right that workers on public works projects have already obtained (as of January 1, 2016) and goes against the legislative intent of the sick time law. Protecting all workers, their families, coworkers and consumers from spreading illness and disease or losing out on much needed pay is something that this legislature sought to remedy when passing sick time last year. It is with this in mind that our members oppose SB 1594.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Billman". The signature is written in a cursive style with some loops and flourishes.

Kevin Billman
Vice President, UFCW Local 555
Director of Legislative and Community Action