

March 8, 2017

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Workforce,

On behalf of AFT-Oregon, I respectfully request that you oppose SB 779 to rollback paid sick days coverage in Oregon. AFT-Oregon represents approximately 15,000 workers in Oregon's community college and universities in faculty, graduate employee, and classified positions, as well as K-12 classified positions and child care workers.

Our members believe strongly that given the very real threats to the basic health and well-being of our communities at the national level, we should be working together to protect and expand the basic rights we have just achieved here in Oregon, not roll them back.

Our organization was part of the Fair Shot coalition that worked hard 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 as an important public health measure and as a basic right that all workers should be entitled to.

All too often workers were going to work sick because they couldn't afford to take the time off or they feared retaliation – even losing their job - if they missed even one day of work because of illness. We are proud of this new law, which benefits hundreds of thousands of workers in our state who waited too long for this basic right.

We are opposed to any changes to the new sick time law, like SB 779, that roll back or eliminate sick time protections for any worker in Oregon. If even a single worker loses access to paid sick time, we see that as too many. While SB 779 might be characterized as a simple technical fix, we respectfully disagree. We see it as a substantive policy shift that has the net impact of taking paid sick time away from workers who are currently eligible for and receive paid sick time under Oregon's historic paid sick time law.

We hope that you will join us in opposing SB 779.

Sincerely,



Marcus Swift
Director of Political and Legislative Affairs
AFT-Oregon