

Members of the Lane County Legislative Delegation,

Please consider giving your support towards the health and safety of our citizens and to our fragile economy. Due to the unexpected onset of the COVID pandemic, businesses, non-profit organizations, schools, governments, transit providers and other entities responded immediately to the direction of our Governor and the Oregon Health Authority in order to protect our citizens. Everyone continues to shift and adapt on a daily basis as recommendations are refined. All are working collaboratively to reopen in order to serve our communities and preserve our regional economy.

Protection from limited liability would encourage employers to follow OHA recommendations and guidelines because in doing so, they would be protected against lawsuits. Liability protections would also serve to incentivize widespread workplace testing to aid in addressing the virus. We are NOT asking for protections if businesses, etc. are not following the guidelines – hence from gross negligence or willful misconduct. The protection we are seeking would only be applicable to those entities who under the direction of this Governor, are following the best practices outlined by the Oregon Health Authority and her administration. It would not cover willful misconduct, gross negligence or any protections for entities not working to comply with established guidelines.

There is still so much information that we don't know about this virus and businesses and organizations are all doing their best to follow the guidelines. As everyone evolves and responds to an ever-changing landscape adherence to those guidelines is best incentivized by granting safe harbor from claims of gross negligence. Please make liability protections for businesses, governments, healthcare organizations and all other entities serving the public, a priority for the Special Session.

Thank you,

**Victoria Whitman**

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