

Good afternoon, my name is Josh Tompkins and I am the Chair of the Public Policy Committee for the Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce. The Hillsboro Chamber represents more than 50,000 jobs in and around the Hillsboro area.

We are testifying today to share our concerns about the very real potential for lawsuits should an employee or customer contract COVID-19.

The Governor's executive orders have flattened the COVID-19 curve, but the changing regulatory environment has also created immense exposure and uncertainty for our business community.

We are concerned that even though businesses take steps to follow public health guidelines, they are still at risk of a lawsuit from a customer or employee saying that they didn't do enough to protect them from exposure. One of these lawsuits would cripple a local business. It's already tough to keep their doors open in these challenging economic times.

Businesses need temporary and targeted COVID-19 liability relief to prevent further financial jeopardy as Oregon starts to reopen. Temporary COVID-19 liability protections are not a license for a business to intentionally ignore safety precautions. However, targeted liability protection will ensure that employers who are following best practices and state-issued public health guidelines don't suffer further economic harm.

We ask you to pass temporary and targeted liability protections to shield local businesses from legal risk when they are following state public health guidelines to protect employees and customers from the coronavirus. Please don't leave them exposed to unnecessary legal risk.

Thank you for your leadership during these unprecedented times.

Best,

Josh Tompkins
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
Public Policy Committee