

Good afternoon co-Chairs Courtney and Kotek and members of the Committee. For the record, I'm Tiffany Edwards. I'm the Director of Business Advocacy for the Eugene Chamber of Commerce and I'm here to express strong support for legislation related to addressing COVID that would provide reasonable liability protections for businesses, non-profits, governments, schools, healthcare organizations and other entities that provide services to the public.

Last week, I authored a letter that was sent to the Lane County legislative delegation. It was signed by both the Eugene and Springfield Chambers of Commerce, the cities of both Eugene and Springfield, Lane County, Lane Community College, Lane Transit District and Willamalane, all supporting this ask.

The Eugene and Springfield Chambers of Commerce represent roughly 2000 businesses and their employees in our region, the vast majority are small businesses and include women and minority owned businesses, who are really struggling right now. Businesses along with every other entity I mentioned above, have had to incur tremendous effort and expense to make sure to diligently follow the guidelines that have been provided by the Oregon Health Authority and our Governor.

Our Eugene Chamber launched the hashtag lovelanebiz campaign, to recognize and promote businesses who have taken the pledge to follow the rules and we are all trying our very best. No business wants to be tied to an outbreak or have their workforce compromised, forcing them to shut their doors. They want to be open to serve their customers and to stay in business.

And for those businesses who are not taking things seriously, we are not asking you to restrict a worker's or an individual's right to the courts or to damages due to gross negligence or willful misconduct.

Our ask is that you consider common sense liability protection for businesses, schools, local governments, non-profits and other entities who need protection when following orders issued by the Governor and guidelines issued by the government during this crisis. Please consider amending LC 45 to include straight-forward liability protection for entities from unwarranted lawsuits during this pandemic.

I sincerely thank you for your time and consideration.