

Good Morning!

I am writing as a resident and representative of Fessler Nursery in the Woodburn/Monitor/Mt. Angel area. My husband's family founded our nursery in 1960. We are both college educated in business and engineering. We are smart, considerate, even-tempered, and compassionate to our employees and community. HB 3031 Paid Family & Medical Leave, was recently brought to my attention.

WHO comes up with these ideas with seemingly NO options for small businesses and agri-related businesses? Here is how I see this going down for our nursery, should this pass:

1. *Hire more contract labor* so WE don't have to manage and pay for YET another state-mandated, expensive labor law (ie: forced min. wage increase, sick pay, etc).
  - a. This leads to less skilled, permanent laborers as we will do everything we can to minimize hiring.
2. *Shrinkage or non-expansion* of business. There is already a labor shortage. This law will further the mindset of a holding pattern, non-expansion.
3. *Discouragement of family succession*. Most family farms are passed from generation to generation. We will not encourage our children to bear the weight of such a challenging prospect. It is difficult enough to run and work within a family, agriculture structure. Laws like this contribute to the straws on the camel's back. Most assuredly.
4. *Reduce or eliminate current employees through equipment modernization and technology*. How would this proposed bill keep Oregonians employed and paying into the Oregon's income tax coffers? It won't. We will seek technology to replace employees where possible. But in reality, hands-on labor is our number one business expense.
5. *Holding a person's position for seasonal work?* How does that even compute? I'm not sure I have this right, but if are forced to hold someone's position, then when they are ready to return to work...ummmm, it's seasonal and there is no longer work?
6. *Disincentivised employees*. It is not hard to imagine many scenarios where an employee will find the need for a medical leave, family emergency, etc. We already have all of our labor looking to use their state-mandated sick leave at every turn. This is the truth.
7. *Costs passed onto consumers*. Inflation, anyone??

I'm sure I could sit here all day and come up with many more reasons that this is a bad proposition. *The overall expense and handing of yet another layer of state-mandated red tape to manage, is getting horribly tiresome*. If we could up and move our greenhouses and property, don't think we wouldn't consider it. But we certainly can close our doors and go work for the state or a huge corporation who is better equipped (are they really though?) to manage this kind of continual burden to business and employers.

HB 3031 is a bad idea. It is an unrealistic one that creates further burden for Oregonian business, but will especially hurt small and agri-business. I urge you to throw this proposal into the shredder.

Sincerely,

Katy Fessler  
Fessler Nursery Co.  
Woodburn, OR