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March 21, 2019

The Honorable Jeff Barker
Chair, House Committee on Business and Labor
The Honorable Kathleen Taylor
Chair, Senate Committee on Workforce
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: House Bill 3031

Dear Chair Barker, Chair Taylor and Members of the Committees,

On behalf of the Roseburg Area Chamber of Commerce, our members and Douglas County businesses, I wish to express our distress about the adverse impacts of HB 3031. This bill is proposing one of the most aggressive family leave taxes in the country and will significantly harm our local businesses and ultimately, local employees.

The Roseburg Area Chamber of Commerce represents over 400 members, who employ approximately 17,000 citizens in our community. The chamber, together with Douglas County businesses are committed to growing business opportunities and providing family-wage jobs for citizens in our community. As you are certainly aware, HB 3031 would create a costly new government-run, mandatory leave program funded by all public- and private-sector employers and employees through a new payroll tax. The tax would be levied on all employers, regardless of whether or not they already provide employers with a family leave benefit.

This bill, if passed, would require up to 32 weeks of paid leave each year. During this time, Oregon employers would be required to maintain the position for the full duration of a worker's leave while finding temporary, skilled workers to replace those on leave. This is an added cost to local businesses where 80 % of our businesses are small businesses already challenged to have their workforce needs met and, in rural Oregon struggling to make ends meet. HB 3031 also doesn't require leave to be taken concurrently with Oregon Family Leave Act, which means that employees still could qualify for unpaid leave after using up the 32 weeks of paid leave. This provision creates substantial uncertainty and untenable risk for small, local businesses.

Requiring employers to maintain a job for an employee who is absent up to 32 weeks each year also requires the employer to maintain that absent employee's non-wage benefits. Failing to do so could be deemed discriminatory. This puts tremendous pressure on employers of all sizes, devastating for small business. For many Oregon businesses, it will be impossible to do what HB 3031 requires and failure to do so would trigger substantial penalties.



*To advocate for and be the voice of the business community in the greater Roseburg area.
To strengthen, enhance and protect our members through political advocacy, economical development, community promotion and member programs and services.*

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Oregon businesses are working to comply with the state's paid sick leave law, minimum wage increases, predictive scheduling law, overtime mandate and the new and complex equal pay law, while struggling to stay financially viable. This aggressive, over-reaching family and medical leave mandate would only serve to further burden local businesses, employees and thwart job and economic growth in Oregon communities, especially rural communities.

We respectfully request you oppose HB 3031. Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

ROSEBURG AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Debra L. Fromdahl, IOM
President & CEO

cc: Members of the House Business & Labor Committee
Members of the Senate Workforce Committee
Members of Douglas County's State Legislative Delegation

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