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March 20, 2019

Dear Chair Taylor, Chair Barker, and members of the committee(s),

We are writing today to express our concerns about the impacts of HB 3031. This proposed bill is one of the most aggressive family leave taxes under consideration in the country and will definitely harm our local businesses.

The Bandon Chamber of Commerce represents over 250 members who are committed to growing business opportunities and providing living-wage jobs for families in our community. HB 3031 would create a costly new government-run, mandatory leave program that would be 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.

Requiring up to 32 weeks of paid leave each year and during this time, 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 businesses. 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 increases the uncertainty and risk for local businesses.

Requiring an employer 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. For many Oregon businesses, it will be impossible to do what HB 3031 asks of them, and failure to do so would trigger substantial penalties.

Oregon businesses are still 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. Now is not the time to pass an aggressive family and medical leave mandate that would further burden local businesses and disincentivize growth in Bandon.

Please oppose HB 3031.

Sincerely,

Margaret Pounder
Interim Executive Director

Larry Langenberg
Board Member & Owner of Edgewater's Restaurant

Angela Cardas-Meredith
President, Board of Directors
& Owner, Cardas Audio

Rick Stillwagon
Board Member & Owner of Stillwagon Distillery

Chris Powell
Board Member and Owner, Bandon Baking Co

Rushel Reed
Board Member & Principal Broker

Anthony Zunino
Board Member and Owner, Freedom Graphics