

I am the owner of three very small businesses. I own a small, local real estate brokerage, a real estate team, and a property management company. The largest employer of these companies has 3 full time employees. The other two have a half time employee and one full time and one half time employee. The bill that you are suggesting would hurt not only my businesses but also my employees. I cannot afford to pay more in payroll taxes, and neither can they. I cannot afford to raise them to cover the difference it will make in their paychecks. It is already a struggle for a small business to keep good employees when the minimum wage is so high, and we cannot afford to pay much more than the minimum wage. If this bill passes, I will be forced to let most if not all of my employees go. But I would be one of the "lucky" businesses, because I can actually hire independent contractors to do the work rather than employees. It's just easier to have employees because they already know what to do, and with independent contractors, I have to tell them each time what job I want them to do. In addition, this law would result in discrimination against any prospective employee who would be considered at risk to take this kind of leave, i.e. young women who may have children or individuals with health concerns. Of course companies wouldn't say they weren't hiring a person based on this, but realistically, if they have the choice between a young newlywed woman, a person who is a cancer survivor (but may get cancer again), or a middle-aged, healthy man, who do you think they will hire?

I also think this bill is bad for large businesses. The cost involved would be prohibitive. In addition, how do companies, big or small, operate when one or more of their employees are gone more than half of the year on medical or family leave? I think some of the ramifications of this bill would be:

1. Businesses hiring a minimum number of employees, which would result in higher unemployment and longer lines at grocery stores, gas stations, etc while the same number of consumers wait for a smaller number of employees to help them.
2. Any business that can leave Oregon would leave Oregon. If my businesses could be moved out of state, I would move without hesitation to a state with more business-friendly practices. Unfortunately for me, my businesses are rooted in and dependent upon name recognition and referral business confined to where I currently reside.

I think this bill is a bad idea for Oregon, for businesses, employees, and consumers. Please vote against it.

Sincerely,

Joni McCreith