

March 25, 2019

Dear Chair Barker, Chair Taylor, and members of the committees,

I am writing today to express my deep concerns about the impacts of HB 3031 and SB 947. These proposed bills are the most aggressive family leave taxes under consideration in the country and will harm our local businesses.

I am a small business owner who has been committed to growing business opportunities and providing living-wage jobs for families in my community. HB 3031 & SB 947 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 of us employers, regardless of whether or not we already provide employees with family leave benefits.

This bill 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 my business. HB 3031 SB 947 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 my business and could create major operational challenges in running my operations in an efficient and professional manner.

Requiring me to maintain a job for an employee who is absent up to 32 weeks each year also requires me to maintain that absent employee's non-wage benefits. Failing to do so could be deemed discriminatory. This puts tremendous pressure on myself and 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 like mine 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 Oregon communities.

Please oppose HB 3031 and SB 947.

Sincerely,

Diana L Helm
Terra Casa, LLC
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