

March 25, 2018

Small Business Owner Support for HB3031

Chair Barker, Chair Taylor & Committee Members,

I am a small business restaurateur with three locations and over 100 employees. **I write to express my strong support for HB301.**

I weigh in subsequent to reading the testimony of many fellow small business owners who oppose this bill due to concerns about the rising cost of business, and while I can relate to those concerns, there is a cost to not providing this benefit as well.

My businesses are only as healthy as the employees who make them run – they are the heart of the operations. Currently we strive to ensure employees are able to take time away for medical emergencies and family obligations as needed without suffering economically. Due to the simple economics of the restaurant business my employees and the employees of many other restaurants are not high wage earners. As a result any time away can result in workers not enough money to cover basic needs. Currently I provide aid to employees when they are injured or need time to care for a very sick family member that goes beyond the benefits currently provided through the sick leave program, and doing so is very costly. Virtually all of the jobs I provide require mobility so I have in the past created positions I really do not need just to keep injured employees working so they can meet their financial obligations. This program proposed in HB3031 will provide an economical mechanism by which all employees and self-employed individuals in the state will have economic protection in the event of medical emergencies and other life events. Employees who become economically stressed due to family illness or the need to care for a new child or need to set aside those obligations to make ends meet are not being set up to succeed. This bill will enable all employers – large and small – to provide these important benefits for a reasonable cost we all share in.

While I strongly support HB3031, I do not support SB947 since it does not provide a feasible payment mechanism for benefits. I appreciate the senate bill's language around more broadly defining family, however, the crux of providing this leave is doing so in a way that invigorates both our businesses and our employees, especially Oregon's small businesses and their employees, and SB947 would not accomplish that.

I encourage you all to please investigate additional provisions such as grants for temporary workers and training that could make this legislation more palatable to some of the opponents and further serve to make this program successful. I appreciate your work on this topic and attention to the small details that will hopefully make this a winning model for other states to follow.

Sincerely,

Joe Buck
Lake Oswego
Owner, Babica Hen & Gubanc's