

April 23, 2019

RE: HB 3214 Hardship Licenses for Stay at Home Parents

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Jill Verboort, and I am a small-business owner. My husband and I have been married since 2008, and we have two young daughters, ages 9 and 6. When we were married, my husband had been the "bread-winner" for our family. He commuted 30-minutes each way to a corporate job, 8am-5pm, Monday through Friday.

I opened my first insurance agency in 2009. By 2016, I had grown my business to a point where I was considering opening a second location. Personally, we were entering a very busy phase of our daughter's lives. They would each be attending a different school, with one being half-days, and one being full-days. They also were participating in after-school and evening activities such as soccer, dance, and theatre.

Faced with the opportunity of opening a second location, I realized that morning drop-offs, mid-day pick-ups, afternoon pick-ups, volunteer hours at the schools, and after-school activities would become increasingly difficult. Especially since these responsibilities would only be able to fall on my shoulders due to the inflexibility of my husband's corporate job. We weighed several possibilities, such as a nanny, au-pair, asking family for help; but in the end made a personal decision that we didn't want to hire out those responsibilities.

Instead, in November of 2016 my husband and I started discussing the possibility of him becoming a stay-at-home dad. We had several meetings with our accountant and our financial advisor, as the impact of losing an income would be significant change for our family. But we were able to find a way to make it work and four months later, in March of 2017, my husband left his job and income to become a stay-at-home parent.

In January of 2018 I was able to realize the dream of opening a second business location, and my family life felt very balanced based on our ability to have a parent at home.

In November of 2018 my husband made a huge error in judgment and was charged with DUII. Since that time he has entered a diversion program and had his license suspended. Unfortunately, he was unable to apply for a hardship license because of verbiage in Oregon State law that determined his stay-at-home dad status did not have a financial impact on our family.

I could not disagree more with this. My husband may not deposit a paycheck into our bank account by being a stay-at-home parent. But he makes it possible for me to work full-time and run two thriving small businesses by taking the responsibilities such as school drop-off/pickup, grocery shopping, and errand running off of my already over-flowing plate. The financial impact to my businesses over the past 3 months of him being unable to drive have been significant, as I have taken on these responsibilities.

I urge you to consider the financial decision a family makes when choosing to have a stay-at-home parent. The responsibilities that person takes on so that the other parent is able to earn an income and support them is hard to put a price tag on, but for me and my family the cost is significant.

Thank you, Jill Verboort