



August 10, 2020

Joint Committee on the Second Special Session of 2020

RE: Senate Bill 1701

Dear Co-Chairs Courtney and Kotek and Members of the Joint Committee:

Oregon legislators have a unique opportunity to support employees returning to work as part of the second special session. Currently, unemployment benefits are not accessible once weekly wages earned equal ten times the minimum wage. Based on current minimum wage rates in Oregon, the weekly earnings you can make before losing unemployment benefits ranges from \$115 a week to \$132.50 a week. Allowing employees to earn up to \$300 a week while maintaining access to unemployment benefits will help relieve the tough financial calculation employees must currently consider before picking up extra shifts.

Due to extensive changes in demand in sectors including retail and hospitality, many full-time positions in existence prior to the pandemic are not yet sustainable. Senate Bill 1701 provides additional financial flexibility to employees which in turn will support opportunities for more earned wages in part time positions.

We have industry operators across the state who need a complement on behalf of their workers as they attempt to plan in an incredibly challenging environment. Employers, through Senate Bill 1701, will be able to offer a return to work plan for employees who have been furloughed with the confidence they are softening the financial impacts felt by their furloughed workforce by offering weekly earned income up to \$300. Increasing the baseline unemployment insurance benefit for part time workers in combination with wages available through part time work will assist Oregon families and employers on our path to economic recovery.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of the proposal. It makes sense for Oregon employees and will therefore assist employers in regaining traction in filling part time work shifts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Brandt", written in a cursive style.

Jason Brandt
President & CEO
Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association