



February 24, 2021

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Dear Chair Power and Members of the House Subcommittee on Civil Law,

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for HB 2638.

The Oregon State Chamber of Commerce represents 86 local chambers of commerce and more than 27,000 local businesses from every corner of the state. These local businesses are the life-blood of their communities and Oregon's economy.

This past year has been a difficult one for the business community. The onset of COVID-19 resulted in wide-spread changes to the way businesses operate. Businesses invested in expensive solutions to keep their employees and customers safe. Employers shifted to accommodate their employees working remotely. They faced closures and uncertainty. They have had to adjust in a constantly shifting environment in order to comply with Governor Brown's executive orders, agency mandates and federal guidelines to protect the health of their employees and the public.

We are concerned that, despite their best efforts to comply with these guidelines, businesses are still vulnerable to lawsuits, putting Oregon employers at risk should a customer get sick and claim the business didn't do enough to protect them from exposure. Just one of these lawsuits could force a business to close permanently even after having survived the pandemic.

HB 2638 would ensure that businesses acting in good faith would be protected from unwarranted lawsuits. It recognizes the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 emergency and provides timely and targeted protections for businesses at a time when they need it most.

The protection in HB 2638 is the result of workgroup efforts in 2020 to address an identified problem and aligned to approach the issue in a reasonable way that allows an off-ramp in circumstances where entities were acting under orders issued by the Governor or following guidelines issued by the state. These liability protections are not a license for a business to intentionally ignore safety precautions, but will ensure that employers who are following best practices and state-issued public health guidelines don't suffer further economic harm.



States across the country have provided liability protection to businesses to protect them against COVID-19 lawsuits. It is time Oregon do the same.

Businesses have worked extremely hard in difficult circumstances to protect the health of Oregonians. Please don't leave them exposed to unnecessary legal risk in these uncertain times.

Please support HB 2638.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gioia Goodrum".

Gioia Goodrum  
OSCC Board Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "JL Wilson".

JL Wilson  
OSCC Legislative Counsel