

Submitter: Laurie Snyder

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: SB1515

Chair Holvey and members of the Committee:

My name is Laurie Snyder and I am submitting testimony in opposition to SB 1514 and 1515 in their current form. SB 1515 proposes to remove provisions of protected leave under the Oregon Family Leave Act (OFLA) when the same type of leave is covered by Oregon's paid family and medical leave insurance program, also known as Paid Leave Oregon (PLO).

Removal of rights to job-protected leave under OFLA could lead workers to lose their jobs. PLO requires that an employee apply for it, but OFLA requires an employer to notify the employee within 5 business days of acquiring knowledge that leave may be OFLA qualifying. The employer must pay the employee's out-of-pocket costs for any medical verification under OFLA. By removing the provisions of OFLA that are covered by PLO, this puts all of the burden on employees, and disproportionately disadvantages low wage employees and employees who speak other languages who may not be aware of their rights to take PLO.

OFLA offers greater protections than FMLA. An employee could qualify for OFLA and not qualify for FMLA if their employer doesn't employ enough employees, if they haven't worked for the employer for a full year or worked enough hours, or they are using leave to care for a family member not covered under the narrower FMLA definition.

The reduction in bereavement leave under OFLA is unnecessary and mean spirited. It doesn't happen that often that an employee loses multiple family members in a single year, but on those occasions that it does occur the leave would definitely be needed. Bereavement leave is not covered by PLO so there is no economic reason to reduce the leave, but SB 1515 needlessly proposes to reduce the maximum amount of bereavement leave from 12 weeks to 4 weeks. Having lost both my parents and my spouse I can assure you that there is a legitimate time need for additional time if multiple deaths occur within the same year.

For these reasons I ask that you vote to oppose SB 1515 and 1514 in their current form.