



**FROM THE DESKS OF:**

**Senators Diane Rosenbaum and Elizabeth Steiner  
Hayward, MD and Representatives Michael Dembrow  
and Jessica Vega Pederson**

For Immediate Release

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**Legislators to Convene Workgroup on Earned Sick Days**

Workgroup is tasked with fine-tuning the proposal and seeking broad stakeholder input

Salem, Oregon (June 5, 2013) – When it comes to paid sick days, it is clear that too many Oregonians don't have access to sick time and that those who do often can't afford to lose a day's wages to stay home and recuperate. HB 3390, which was heard in the House Rules Committee today, proposes that Oregon employers with six or more employees allow their employees to accrue paid sick time while they work that can be used when they, or a family member, are ill. This bill would help the nearly 600,000 Oregonians who currently don't earn a single paid sick day – nearly 48% of our private-sector workforce.

“This bill is about providing a basic standard for people who do not have access to any type of sick leave, paid or unpaid. HB 3390 would enable them to see a doctor when they need to or be with their children when they are ill. We have a choice about the kind of economy we create in Oregon – and we can choose to have it be one where everyone prospers and thrives,” said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-21), a chief sponsor of the legislation.

Members of the House Rules Committee, who listened to compelling testimony in support and opposition to HB 3390 today, wisely identified a process by which stakeholders will engage in work together to hammer out the components of a bill that the legislature will consider in the future. Rules Committee Vice Chair Val Hoyle added that legislators testifying in support of the measure will convene an interim workgroup, similar to the one that helped shape Portland's policy earlier this year, to work with stakeholders to bring a proposal back to the legislature.

A long-time champion of this issue, Representative Michael Dembrow (D-45) spoke in favor of the need for a statewide standard: “This issue disproportionately impacts low-income workers who have the least capability to afford unpaid time off but are also the least likely to have paid sick time now. This is an economic security issue for too many poor families. Getting the flu shouldn't mean you can't put food on the table or make your rent.”

Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, a doctor, testified that “HB 3390 is at heart a public health issue. Workplaces are notorious places for spreading contagion, to colleagues and customers, because people go to work sick when their incomes and jobs aren't protected. Access to earned sick

leave also greatly reduces the burden on emergency services by ensuring that people can see the doctor when they first become sick, rather than waiting until things get much more serious and more costly to treat.”

In her testimony, Representative Jessica Vega Pederson highlighted the impacts of not earning paid sick time has on children, families and Oregon’s many small businesses, saying “We need to level the playing field. Research shows that businesses do better when workers don’t come in sick – having an earned sick leave policy increases productivity, reduces turnover, and boosts morale. My husband's Oregon small business provides paid sick time and we know it increases worker productivity, makes it easier to recruit new employees, and reduces turnover.”

“We look forward to a productive conversation with stakeholders, Oregonians and advocates as we work to craft a paid sick days policy for Oregon that serves our employees and employers well. We have a very strong start in HB 3390 and feel confident that with some additional dialogue we will be able to move ahead with statewide legislation soon,” said Sen. Steiner Hayward.

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