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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:
Rose King, (503) 863-1363, rose@brinkcomm.com

Paid Sick Days Bills Introduced in Both Chambers, Marking a Key Agenda Item for the 2015 Session

Obama Administration to announce support for cities and states to implement paid sick days laws

(Salem, Ore.)—January 15, 2015—This week two paid sick days bills were among the first bills to be introduced in the 2015 Oregon legislative session. [Senate Bill 454](#) and [House Bill 2005](#) would ensure all working Oregonians can earn a reasonable number paid sick days every year. The bills— co-sponsored by Senator Steiner Hayward of Beaverton and Representative Vega Pederson of Portland— now await a hearing.

“Everybody gets sick. This is about providing a statewide standard so workers all across Oregon can both provide for and responsibly care for their health and their families,” said Andrea Paluso, Everybody Benefits Coalition Chair and Family Forward Oregon Executive Director.

On the heels of Oregon’s proposed paid sick days legislation, a [statement from the Obama Administration](#) is expected today, announcing a call to action for cities and states to pass and implement paid sick days laws.

Paid sick time has gained support all over the country in the last few years as three states and 15 cities have now passed laws and approved measures granting workers access to paid sick days. The City of Portland and the City of Eugene are among those who have passed their own city ordinances.

“Too many Oregonians face an impossible choice when illness strikes,” said Senator Steiner Hayward, a doctor and chief co-sponsor of both bills. “We need to proactively tackle this issue now so every working Oregonian can afford to stay home when sick, see a doctor when needed or care for a child when they get ill.”

New data from the [Institute for Women’s Policy Research \(IWPR\)](#) shows that 47 percent of private sector workers in Oregon lack even a single paid sick day. There’s an even larger gap in access among Hispanic workers in Oregon with 62 percent lacking paid sick time. IWPR also details how low-wage workers are less likely to have access to paid sick days than higher-paid workers. In Oregon, 82 percent of those earning more than \$65,000

annually have access to paid sick time compared to 29 percent of Oregonians earning less than \$20,000 annually.

“These bills have the potential to help us prevent poverty and reduce inequities here in Oregon,” said Representative Vega Pederson, chief co-sponsor. “Ensuring all Oregonians can earn paid sick time is a common sense solution for families who are still struggling from the recession, including low-wage workers and families of color who are hurting the most.”

SB 454 and HB 2005 would allow workers to accrue one hour of sick time for every 30 hours worked, up to 56 hours in a year. Sick time can be used for the diagnosis, care or treatment of the worker or a member of their family. Both bills protect employees from retaliation or discrimination for the use of sick time.

About the Everybody Benefits Coalition:

Everybody Benefits is Oregon’s campaign for paid sick days. Formed by a broad coalition of members who believe that Oregonians needs a basic workplace standard for paid sick days to protect the public health and the health of our workers, our families, our healthcare system and the economy. Members include: American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, Causa Oregon, Center for Intercultural Organizing, Family Forward Oregon, Main Street Alliance of Oregon, MomsRising.org, The Mother PAC, Oregon Nurses Association, Oregon Working Families, Service Employees International Union Local 503, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555, Urban League of Portland and Working America.

Two fact sheets about paid sick days in Oregon are attached with this release.

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