

800 NE Oregon Street
Portland, OR 97232

Voice: (971) 673-1222

FAX: (971) 673-1299

Nonvoice – TTY – (971) 673-0372

March 25, 2013

TO: The Honorable Margaret Doherty, Chair
House Committee on Business and Labor

FROM: Melvin Kohn, MD, MPH, Director
Public Health Division
Oregon Health Authority

MEASURE: HB 2903
EXHIBIT: 13
H BUSINESS & LABOR
DATE: 3-25-2013 PAGES: 2
SUBMITTED BY: Dr. Mel Kohn given by
Sybil Hebb

SUBJECT: HB 2903 Safe Leave Act

Chair Doherty and members of the committee, I am Dr. Mel Kohn, Public Health Director and State Public Health Officer in the Oregon Health Authority. I am submitting written testimony in support of the Safe Leave Act.

Intimate Partner Violence is a very serious and prevalent public health problem. Surveys we have done in Oregon together with national data have clearly demonstrated this:

- One in four women and one in seven men in Oregon have experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime,
- One in six women, has been the victim of forcible rape in her lifetime – 80% experienced their first rape before the age of 25 (almost half before age 18),
- Thirty-seven percent of women and 34 percent of men in Oregon have experienced rape, physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetimes,
- Violence contributes to poor health outcomes such as smoking, obesity, suicide attempts, depression and anxiety that are costly in both human and financial terms across the lifespan, and
- Intimate partner violence costs the U.S. economy \$12.6 billion annually and Oregon an estimated \$50 million per year.

This issue has particular importance for Oregon. In 2011, the Centers for Disease Control released the results of the first national population based survey on Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and Sexual Violence. I'm sure you will be disturbed to learn that Oregon ranked second in the nation on lifetime prevalence of women who had experienced sexual violence.

The bill before you is a relatively modest response to this serious problem. Women often need time off from work to seek support and services for themselves and their children that have been demonstrated to reduce the incidence of re-assault by 70%. The Safe Leave Act helps to assure that all workers – new, part-time, and full time - will know that they can ask for time off and that they do not have to choose between their job and the services that would contribute to immediate safety and improved lifelong health for themselves and their children.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of the Safe Leave Act. I'll be happy to answer any questions.