

Dear Testimony Business and Labor,

As an Oregon small business owner and NFIB member, I am very concerned about the potential impacts of legislation being considered this year by the state legislature - particularly the creation of a new state-mandated, paid family & medical leave benefit program.

Before you vote on legislation this year, I would ask you to fully consider the effects of these proposals on small business, like mine, in your district.

Small business in Oregon is already having a hard enough time surviving with increases to the minimum wage (and future automatic increases still scheduled for the next couple of years) and paid sick leave (which will only impact us more each year as wages rise).

Oregon employers cannot afford another costly mandated program. As labor costs continue to rise due to state and federal laws, mandated paid family and medical leave will make it more expensive to employ workers and create new jobs.

The economy is already making it difficult to hire and retain qualified employees. Forcing small businesses to hold jobs open for extended periods of time is not going to work! We will be forced to hire unqualified temporary workers or overextend our remaining workforce.

Aside from the hard costs of such a new program, any new employee leave program would be a big change from state and federal laws that currently exempt employers with fewer than 25, and 50 employees, respectively. Please don't treat small businesses like big businesses.

As you consider how you will vote on these bills, please take into account the many potential consequences for small businesses like mine. I'll be looking forward to seeing that your work in the legislature ensures that Oregon's small businesses are able to thrive without undue hardships imposed on them by the government.

Please vote NO on state-mandated, employer-funded paid family & medical leave HB 3031.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Mark Hicks
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