

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 owners in your district, like me.

I'm concerned about the prospect of a paid family and medical leave program because, in recent years, Oregon has already enacted increases to the minimum wage, with future automatic increases still scheduled for the next couple of years, and paid sick leave, which continues to cost small businesses 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.

If the state creates another worker benefits program, both public and private employers will be responsible for paying for it via payroll taxes, increased income taxes, or both. The cost to state and local governments alone would have dire consequences for public budgets that are already overburdened by generous benefit packages.

Additionally, Oregon's smallest employers would be faced with impossible situations when one or more employees access the benefit, forcing small businesses to hold jobs open for extended periods of time, hire unqualified temporary workers, or overextend their remaining workforce in a time where the economy is already making it difficult to hire and retain qualified employees.

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.

Further, we are an insurance agency. Insurance rates are subject to approval by the insurance commissioner. Commission rates are set by the insurers. Agents cannot force premium rates higher nor can we effectively demand more commission. And, we cannot add service fees according to Oregon Statutes. Unfunded mandates like this have the potential of putting us out of business.

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,

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