



STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF SB 716-1:

**To the Senate Committee On Business and General Government
From United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555
March 2, 2021**

Chair Riley, Vice-Chair Hansel, and Members of the Senate Committee On Business and General Government:

UFCW Local 555 supports SB 716 with the -1 Amendments, which will help ensure that working families' needs are honored in the workplace. Working families are bearing the brunt of the COVID-19 crisis, which exacerbates the already difficult task of securing childcare, and need help now. Passing Senate Bill 716 (as amended by the 716-1 amendments) would give these struggling workers protections and peace of mind by requiring employers to accommodate childcare needs when writing work schedules.

UFCW Local 555 is over 25,000 workers strong in Oregon in Southwest Washington, and the largest private sector labor union in Oregon. We are a diverse group of workers who take pride in acting as a strong collective voice for working people. Our members come from a number of industries, including grocery, retail, food processing, and healthcare.

We believe every worker deserves to be treated with respect and dignity on the job. Further, every employer has a responsibility to both their employees and the community they reside in. Oregon's COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the importance of accommodating worker's child care needs.

We can all see how the COVID-19 pandemic has only worsened Oregon's childcare crisis. Every day, workers in our community scramble to find care for their children. Employers should treat these workers with compassion and dignity by accommodating working families struggling to reconcile their work and childcare schedules.

As a union, we are asking for the 716-1 amendment, which protects employees' seniority rights under a valid collective bargaining agreement. A worker who has given years of service to their employer shouldn't be retaliated against and stripped of their seniority rights because they needed to take care of their child, nor should an employer be able to deny a worker's seniority when making scheduling decisions. As the arbiter of the schedule, it is the employer's responsibility to take all factors into account and they should be able to anticipate potential scheduling conflicts as they are crafting them. This amendment specifically protects workers' seniority rights, and we're asking for your support of this amendment.

Working families are struggling to balance childcare and work during COVID-19, they need your help. SB 716 as amended would require employers to reasonably accommodate employee's work schedule availability related to child care. We urge you to support this bill, and support working families across Oregon.

Thomas Mosher,
Director, Government and Community Affairs,
UFCW Local 555