

January 2nd, 2021

Adam H Foxworthy
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Oregon State Senate
Committee on Labor and Business

Dear Committee members,

I am writing to you today in support of the proposed Senate Bill 588, regarding expanding Oregon's sick time leave protections to Union Workers.

I am a Journeyman Inside Wireman from IBEW Local 932, in Coos Bay, Oregon. The current sick time rules exempt myself, and my Brothers and Sisters from sick time leave protections. I have seen many people choose to come to work while sick, putting themselves at greater risk of being injured while working in a state of reduced capacity. It also puts every other person working around them at risk for becoming ill. Workers without sick time protections are more likely to come in to work sick, and that is something that we need to take very seriously. In normal times this would be a relatively minor concern. However, due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic this issue escalates to an extreme concern. Sick workers going to work because they cannot afford to lose a day of pay, can cost more than lost profits and delayed projects. It has already cost the lives of at least two people that I have worked with in the past year.

Please also consider that a large portion of the construction workforce travels around the state, sometimes working for multiple employers over the course of a year. The nature of our jobs often sends us back to our hiring hall at the end of a project. Many projects can be as small as a few days, to as large as several years. Any sick time rule not taking this into account and requiring us to fulfill multiple 90 day waiting periods, will not adequately address this lack of protection. To leave workers with a requirement to meet a 90-day waiting period every time they changed employers would render any protection invalid.

Finally, this change will not make any undue burden on our employers. They would be required to give us the same protections that our non-union counterparts receive. Many already give sick leave to their office staff and supervision, while some already do give their construction workers sick leave. Making sure that Union construction workers receive the same sick leave protections as the rest of the workforce in Oregon makes sense.

Thank you for your time.

Adam Hancock Foxworthy
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