

February 24, 2021

Dear Chair Power and Members of the House Subcommittee on Civil Law,

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for HB 2638.

The Canby Chamber of Commerce represents over 250 members who are committed to growing business opportunities and providing living-wage jobs for families in our community

This past year has been a difficult one for the business community. The onset of COVID-19 resulted in wide-spread changes to the way businesses operate.

Example:

Club Fit Fitness, a one of a kind business in Canby has been closed a total of 4.5 months and then forced to operate at extremely low levels of capacity the remainder this pandemic. The facility is always sanitized and operates at the highest levels of sanitation. The business respects the needs and safety of the community and staff and therefore cannot incur any additional expense or burden for a virus that is invisible and unrelated to our business. Health Clubs throughout OREGON have not been the source of even "1" case of Covid and thus cannot shoulder the burden of lawsuits.

Our businesses have had to adjust in a constantly shifting environment in order to comply with Governor Brown's executive orders, agency mandates and federal guidelines to protect the health of their employees and the public.

We are worried that even though businesses take steps to follow public health guidelines, they are still at risk of a lawsuit from a customer saying that they didn't do enough to protect them from exposure. Just one of these lawsuits would cripple a local business. It's already tough to keep their doors open in these challenging economic times. Please don't leave them exposed to unnecessary legal risk.

HB 2638 would ensure that businesses acting in good faith would be protected from unwarranted lawsuits. It recognizes the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 emergency and provides timely and targeted protections for businesses at a time when they need it most.

Temporary COVID-19 liability protections are not a license for a business to intentionally ignore safety precautions, but will ensure that employers who are following best practices and state-issued public health guidelines don't suffer further economic harm in this fragile environment.

Our families and business have been through a lot since the coronavirus took hold. We ask you support HB 2638 and COVID liability protections to shield local businesses from legal risk when they are following state public health guidelines to protect employees and customers.

Respectfully,
Barb Raines, Club Fit Fitness