



A STRONG VOICE FOR OREGON'S WORKERS

To: Chair Taylor
Vice-Chair Bonham
Members of the Senate Labor and Business Committee

FR: Catie Theisen, Oregon AFL-CIO

RE: Support for SB 999 Technical alignments to OFLA and PFML

April 4, 2023

The Oregon AFL-CIO represents 300,000 workers across Oregon and is a voice for all workers in the legislative process. The Oregon AFL-CIO helped pass Paid Family and Medical leave because for far too long, workers had been forced to choose between taking care of a new baby or loved one and losing economic security. With PMFL, in addition to OFLA, workers can take the time they need without fear of losing their job and livelihood.

Our intent with PFML and OFLA was to always create programs that workers could actually access. As such, we do not want to create undue barriers to implementing the program or accessing benefits. SB 999 is the product of several weeks of conversations between business and labor to streamline wherever possible unpaid OFLA benefits with paid PFML benefits to further achieve that goal. The -3 makes the following technical adjustments to the programs:

- Clarifies PFML's intent that where there is a qualifying leave reason that is covered by both OFLA and PMFL (medical leave and pregnancy leave), both banks be used concurrently
- Adds a requirement to PFML that if a workers' job no longer exists, the employer must offer the nearest similar job within 50 miles. Aligns that language to existing OFLA job protections
- Aligns the definition of family in PFML and OFLA to make sure both are expansive and inclusive of today's family structures
- Aligns how benefit year is counted across programs
- Clarifies how employers can collect healthcare payments upon the workers' return in PFML

While important elements of leave – namely bereavement leave and sick child leave – are not covered in PFML, it's critical that OFLA continue to provide job-protected benefits for these leave reasons not covered under PFML. As PFML comes online however, we were happy to work on the -3 amendments to protect and maintain benefits in both programs, while aligning and streamlining where ever possible and practicable.

