

Submitter: Lee Mercer
On Behalf Of: Main Street Alliance
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure: SB1089

Senate Rules Committee
Re: Support for SB 1089 (formerly SB 704)
Support of adequate funding and -1 Amendment

Chair Lieber, Vice Chair Knopp and Members of the Committee,

Main Street Alliance supports the passage of SB 1089 with -1 Amendment and Adequate Funding

Main Street Alliance, an organization representing small business owners throughout the country, has been engaged in advocacy on legislative policy issues impacting main street businesses throughout Oregon for about a decade. We currently have several thousand “Mom and Pop” type businesses on our contact list throughout the state.

In 2012, we began surveying business owners from door to door from Astoria to Ontario and from Ashland to Hermiston. Each year we created a Voices Of Mainstreet report on issues such as access to credit, political spending, workplace benefits, the economy and taxes and health care.

This began in the period in which the Affordable Care Act was rolling out, and we queried business owners on their interest in that program, but also included a question on whether they would support a universal “single payer” type healthcare system. Interestingly, even throughout rural Oregon, where one would expect business owners to be more conservative, support for a single payer system polled consistently at or above 60% in our surveys. In the same survey we learned that 85% of the business owners did not provide health insurance for their employees, and many had none for themselves or their families.

Realizing that a majority of small business owners of Oregon supported universal healthcare, Main Street Alliance joined the many civic organizations, unions, church groups and others advocating for such a system to be created in Oregon. Over the past 10 years, the legislature moved this process forward with steps from funding the Rand Study and the report this year by the Task Force on Universal Healthcare. Then, when the voters in November passed Measure 111 amending the Oregon Constitution to guarantee healthcare as a fundamental right, a foundation was created for Oregon to move forward to be the first state to create a truly universal healthcare system.

Main Street Alliance encourages this committee to pass SB 1089 (formerly SB 704) and move the state of Oregon towards her historic destiny of launching a universal healthcare system. As the state motto reminds us, “she flies with her own wings.”
Let’s get it done!

Lee Mercer

Member, Main Street Alliance Executive Committee in Oregon

Former Organizer/Director

Silverton