



May 10, 2023

TO: House Committee on Business and Labor

FR: Derek Sangston, Policy Director & Counsel, Oregon Business & Industry

RE: Support for SB 999B

Chair Holvey, Vice-Chair Elmer, Vice-Chair Sosa, Members of the Committee:

My name is Derek Sangston, policy director and counsel for Oregon Business & Industry (OBI).

OBI is a statewide association representing businesses from a wide variety of industries and from each of Oregon's 36 counties. In addition to being the statewide chamber of commerce, OBI is the state affiliate for the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Retail Federation. Our 1,600 member companies, more than 80% of which are small businesses, employ more than 250,000 Oregonians.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of SB 999B.

SB 999 is a necessary, albeit not sufficient, step forward in the work we must do to fully align Oregon's disparate leave laws. When the Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance program, now known as Paid Leave Oregon, was enacted in 2019, stakeholders knew that we'd be back here having a discussion about how to ensure Paid Leave Oregon worked with the existing Oregon Family Leave Act (OFLA).

Employers with 25 or more employees are subject to both laws; those with 50 or more are also subject to the Federal Medical Leave Act (FMLA). In fact, employers are the ones who *administer* OFLA and FMLA. But these laws use different definitions, timelines, leave purposes, and other components.

SB 999 is a negotiated bill that takes a few important first steps toward making these programs easier for workers *and* employers to understand and comply with Oregon's programs, especially as Paid Leave Oregon benefits begin in September.

Quickly, SB 999 does a few important things between OFLA and Paid Leave Oregon. It aligns definitions of benefit year and family, aligns job protection provisions, and ensures that timelines run concurrently for leave allowed under both laws. To be clear, the bill provides significant expansions to OFLA through the new definitions, and we still need to see rulemaking to complete the agreed-upon work around the family definition. But, these alignments are good and will help with accurate and efficient administration.

We anticipate being before you again in 2024 as stakeholders and legislators work together to complete the important work around alignment and consolidation of these disparate laws. We'll submit for the record a one-pager from the business community outlining the key areas that still need work and OBI stands ready to continue the negotiating team's work.

We urge you to pass SB 999B. Thank you.

Contact: dereksangston@oregonbusinessindustry.com