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Oregon Expands Family Leave to Help Workers and Families

SALEM – The Oregon Senate passed House Bill 2474 today to expand eligibility for protected leave under the Oregon Family Leave Act. The bill updates Oregon’s leave laws in response to the unique impacts of public health emergencies on workers and families.

Oregon has led the nation in establishing family leave laws and worker protections. In recent legislative sessions, Oregon has passed Paid Sick Leave, a minimum wage increase schedule, a Fair Work Week law, the Equal Pay Act and the nation’s most comprehensive Paid Family and Medical Leave law. By responding to the unique nature of the current public health emergency, Oregon will be prepared for future crises.

“The Oregon Family Leave Act (OFLA) law has not provided the necessary flexibility to properly support our workers and families throughout this devastating public health emergency,” said Senator Kathleen Taylor (D-Portland) who chief sponsored House Bill 2474. “When schools and child care facilities were shut down in order to protect public health and save lives, the impacts disproportionately fell on women, and coupled with the limited scope of job protections, women disproportionately left the workforce.”

House Bill 2474 adds the need to take care of a child during a public health emergency as an eligible circumstance to access OFLA. It also lowers the threshold of days one must have worked in order to qualify for paid leave during such an health emergency. The bill also ensures that a worker does not lose credit for their previous days and hours worked upon reemployment in order to account for changing public health risk and safety measures.

The measure also makes certain gender-neutral language is used to define who can access OFLA after giving birth.

“Families are diverse, and our leave policies must account for that. If you are pregnant, you should be able to access leave no matter your gender identity. This seemingly small change in law is critical for trans Oregonians,” added Senator Taylor.

House Bill 2474 passed with bipartisan support in the Oregon Senate and now goes to the Governor for her approval.

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