



## SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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### NEWS RELEASE

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#### **Protections for domestic workers receive Senate approval**

*SB 552 will extend basic rights to workers in an often unregulated industry*

SALEM –The Oregon Senate approved legislation this morning that establishes workplace protections for certain domestic workers and classifies violations as unlawful employment practices. The protections for domestic workers in SB 552A include overtime pay, periods of rest, paid vacation time, and freedom from harassment.

“Nannies and housekeepers work hard to care for the people and places their employers love most, yet they lack basic protections in the workplace,” said Senator Sara Gelsler (D-Corvallis/Albany), chief sponsor of the bill. “SB 552A changes that, and will guarantee these workers the most basic things: the right to sleep once a day, the right to choose their own food, and the right to reject unwanted sexual advances without fear of retaliation.”

Domestic workers provide in-home services such as childcare, cooking, housekeeping, and maintenance. Many domestic workers live in the home of the employer, often as the only employee. Under current Oregon law, these workers are excluded from many provisions of wage and hour laws as well as laws protecting them from sexual harassment and discrimination.

“This bill is a great example of the purpose and need of having a legislative committee dedicated to workforce issues,” said Senator Michael Dembrow (D-Portland), chair of the Senate Workforce Committee. “We have an obligation to protect people’s basic rights in the workplace and SB 552 is legislation that will provide clear benefits to many marginalized Oregonians.”

According to testimony submitted in support of SB 552 by Family Forward Oregon, a non-profit that advocates on economic security issues that impact women and families in Oregon, there are about 9,794 domestic workers in Oregon, 95 percent of whom are female. Although the bill will provide workers 3 paid days off after one year of work, it will not extend state minimum wage protections to the workers. Instead, only the lower federal minimum wage will apply.

“Domestic workers today still suffer from a lack of protection that the majority of employees otherwise enjoy. Senate Bill 552 will help to right this historical wrong by giving domestic workers – oftentimes women caring for our kids and homes- some of the basic rights given to other workers in our state,” said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland).

The bill will now go to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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