



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Senate expands protected work leave for domestic violence victims

SB 492 will provide greater flexibility for DV victims to get help and rebuild

SALEM – The Senate approved legislation this morning that will give victims of domestic violence greater latitude to deal with their circumstances without taking unpaid leave or risking losing their job. The changes in SB 492 will reduce the financial impact for victims of violence who need to take leave from work and will help employees make the safety decisions that are right for their circumstances.

“Senate Bill 492 is another step towards addressing the overwhelming challenges faced by victims of domestic violence so they can leave the cycle of abuse and rebuild their life,” said Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham), chief sponsor of Senate Bill 492. “This legislation will help alleviate the adverse economic consequences that oftentimes accompany trying to get out of an abusive relationship by allowing victims to use their accrued sick leave or personal business leave to deal with pressing matters that threaten their safety.”

Under current law, any employer who employs at least six individuals is required to allow an eligible employee to take reasonable, paid vacation leave to seek services, assistance or treatment if they are a victim of domestic violence harassment, sexual assault or stalking. Senate Bill 492 allows employees to also use sick leave or personal business leave for those purposes.

“The psychological barriers to freedom for victims of domestic violence are formidable even without the logistical challenges of trying to find housing or legal help while holding down a job,” said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland). “This legislation will help domestic violence victims and their children get their lives back together.”

In 2007, the Oregon Legislature recognized the importance of removing workplace barriers to safety for victims and their children and passed SB 946, a law that gives victims the right to take reasonable unpaid leave from work if necessary to take steps to become safer. The law provides employers the ability to seek documentation of eligibility and to limit the amount of leave if necessary to prevent an undue burden to the employer.

SB 492 will now go to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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