



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Bill helping small businesses provide health insurance moves to Senate floor
Senate committee makes progress on key agenda item, full vote expected Thursday

SALEM – On the second day of the February session, the Senate Health Care committee made progress on a key item on the Senate Democrats’ agenda, moving a bill that gives small businesses and their employees increased access to affordable health insurance.

“The recession has made providing health care much more difficult for small businesses,” said Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham), chief sponsor of the bill and chair of the Senate Health Care Committee. “This bill will give more middle class Oregonians access to health care provided by their employers.”

Senate Bill 1003 modifies provisions in association health plans, which are used by many general contractors and other small businesses to offer health care to their workers. Under current law, 95 percent of all members of an association must participate in order for the association to qualify for the plan. For many associations that threshold has been impossible to meet. SB 1003 creates exemptions in these all-or-nothing plans, giving more Oregonians access to health care.

“This bill demonstrates our commitment to working with Oregon small businesses who are struggling the most during these tough times,” said Senator Alan Bates (D-Ashland), a practicing physician and member of the Senate Health Care Committee. “Today’s vote is an important step as we continue to fight for access for health care for Oregonians.”

Senate Bill 1003 is expected to reach the floor later this week for a vote by the full Senate.

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