



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Senate votes to add bereavement to Oregon Family Leave Act *SB 506 gives qualified employees time to grieve after loss of a loved one*

SALEM – The Oregon Senate voted in support of Senate Bill 506 this morning, legislation that adds the death of a family member as a reasonable use of leave under the Oregon Family Leave Act.

“Oregon has pioneered family leave laws, setting the example for our federal government and others states,” said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland). “I applaud Senator Boquist for introducing this legislation. By adding bereavement leave to Oregon’s law, we reaffirm our commitment that no one should have to choose between their job and their family at a difficult time.”

Oregon has been a leader in family leave for several decades. In 1987, the state enacted parental leave for new births or adoptions. In 1995, the Legislature passed the Oregon Family Leave Act, requiring employers of 25 or more employees to provide their workers with job-protected leave to care for themselves or family members in cases of illness, injury, childbirth or adoption.

SB 506 adds the death of a family member as an appropriate condition for taking job-protected leave from work. The bill allows for two weeks of leave for bereavement, which must be counted toward the total amount of authorized family leave.

“The death of a loved one is almost always a devastating life event,” said Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham). “In particular, those who are responsible for aging parents need time to make arrangements while coping with their loss. Adding bereavement is a reasonable and important addition to Oregon’s family leave laws.”

Under Oregon Family Leave Act, a “family member” includes a son, daughter, grandchild, grandparent, spouse, parent, parent-in-law, and same-gender domestic partner.

“Most employers recognize that if an employee is mourning the loss of a child, spouse, or other loved one it is difficult for them to fulfill their obligations,” said Senator Alan Bates (D-Medford), a physician who owns his own medical practice. “This bill gives employees some time to grieve. It’s the right thing to do.”

The bill now goes to the House for consideration.

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