



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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NEWS RELEASE

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Senate supports bill to give employers a hand, keep workers in their jobs
HB 3140 doubles maximum number of weeks Work Share program is available

SALEM – A bill that helps employers prevent lay-offs and keeps workers in their jobs was passed by the Senate this morning. House Bill 3140 doubles the period of time that employers and workers can take advantage of the state’s Work Share program from 26 to 52 weeks.

“Experienced workers are vital to any business’ success,” said Senator Floyd Prozanski (D-Eugene), who carried the bill on the floor. “But if business is slow, it can be hard to find enough work to keep people on payroll. The Work Share program offers one solution for those businesses that need help staying afloat in this challenging economic environment.”

The Work Share program gives qualified businesses an alternative to laying-off employees by allowing employers to reduce the weekly hours of work, with eligible employees receiving a percentage of unemployment insurance benefits to make up the reduction in wages from lost hours.

“This program strikes a balance between a worker’s need to make a living and the employer’s need to keep on valuable, trained workers,” said Senator Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland), chair of the Senate Commerce and Workforce Development Committee. “Extending the program’s length of coverage will help Oregon families and businesses make ends meet during these tough times.”

To qualify for Work Share an employer must send in a written plan to the Employment Department, designating three or more employees with reduced work hours as participants. The employer must state that work hours and wages will be cut back at least 20 percent but no more than 40 percent per week, and that the normal work week is 40 hours or less. To qualify, each employee must have worked full-time for six months or part-time for 12 months just before employer’s Work Share plan was submitted.

House Bill 3140 was introduced in the House by Rep. Chip Shields (D-Portland) and Rep. Brad Witt (D-Clatskanie). The bill will now go to the Governor for his approval.

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