



## 2019 Issue Summaries

### Improving Life for Working Families

Oregon House Democrats are committed to advocating for working Oregonians with policies that level the playing field, protect workers' right to unionize and bargain collectively, support working families, and ensure a healthy, job-ready workforce.

#### **Passed Into Law**

##### Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance

HB 2005 creates a state-run paid family and medical leave insurance program that gives all employees the time they need to care for new child, recover from a serious illness, or care for a family member with a serious illness. The bill includes strong protections for low-wage workers, including 100% wage replacement for employees whose average weekly wage is less than 65% of the state average weekly wage. The law will go into effect in 2023. Small businesses with less than 25 employees are not required to pay the employer's share of the insurance premium, but are eligible for grant assistance to cover the cost of replacement workers if they choose to do so.

##### Pregnancy Accommodations

HB 2341 requires employers to make reasonable accommodations related to pregnancy and childbirth. Employers with six or more employees must provide reasonable accommodations to known limitations related to pregnancy. BOLI will develop training and education materials for employees and employers.

##### Breastfeeding at Work

HB 2593 requires all employers to provide reasonable rest periods for employees to express milk as often and for as long as needed during a child's first 18 months, removing previous limitations.

##### Workplace Fairness

SB 726 helps level the playing field for workers by improving workplace protections to combat harassment. This includes extending the statute of limitations in employment situations from 1 to 5 years, preventing employers from requiring non-disclosure agreements or no-rehire provisions, and directing BOLI to help create policies and procedures for both employers and employees.

##### Public Employer Workplace Discrimination Policies

SB 479 requires public employers to adopt workplace harassment policies. SB 478 prohibits the use of campaign or public funds for non-disclosure agreements related to workplace harassment.

##### Public Worker Protections

HB 2016 codified best practices in Oregon's collective bargaining statutes, allowing designated representatives reasonable work time to fulfill their duties, requiring employers to provide unions with reasonable communication access with employees in the bargaining unit, expanding the list of unfair labor practices, and clarifying methods of member dues collection.

##### Unemployment Benefits for School Custodial Workers

HB 2660 extends unemployment insurance benefits to custodial workers at schools who expected to work year-round but are laid off during the summer months.

### Wage Accountability in the Construction Industry

HB 3193 ensures that workers in the construction industry are paid what they have earned by coordinating wage claim work between BOLI and the Construction Contractors Board. If contractors fail to pay the wages, the CCB can revoke or suspend construction licenses and the worker would be able to access lost wages from the contractor's bond or the Wage Security Fund up to a higher cap of \$10,000.

### Protections for Injured Workers

HB 3022 ensures workers have adequate diagnostic services as part of their workers' compensation, so that workers' whose injury was originally misdiagnosed can get the necessary treatment. Additionally, insurance companies are required to weigh the severity of the worksite accident against the severity of a pre-existing condition when determining a worker's benefits.

### Overtime Protections for Correctional Nurses

HB 2230 protects nursing staff in the state's correctional facilities by limiting the amount of mandatory overtime they are required to work.

### Health Care Worker Safety

SB 823 builds on Oregon's existing law against violence toward health care employees by requiring health care employers to conduct a comprehensive security and safety evaluation. The bill ensures protections for individuals who report incidents of workplace violence for the evaluation.

### Workers Compensation for Public Safety Workers

SB 507 allows public safety officials to take the necessary time to recover under workers compensation insurance following a post-traumatic stress disorder/injury diagnosis by a psychiatrist or psychologist.

### Collective Bargaining for Health Care Interpreters

HB 2231 gives collective bargaining rights to interpreters who public entities hire to provide critical communication services in the health care system.

### Payday Loan Stacking

HB 2089 protects Oregonians from predatory lending practices by prohibiting payday lenders from making new loans within seven days of an old loan being paid in full. This effectively guards against predatory "loan stacking."

### High Quality Child Care (Baby Promise)

HB 2024 requires the Early Learning Division to establish a program to improve access to high quality infant and toddler care for low-income Oregonians.

### Task Force on Access to Quality Affordable Child Care

HB 2346 establishes a task force on access to quality affordable child care. The task force will make recommendations to the legislature addressing barriers to existing child care subsidies and on expanding access to child care to meet the needs of Oregon families with young children.

### Tax credits

HB 2164 (tax credit package) features benefits for working families, including:

- Earned income tax credit extension and increase, returning approximately \$50 million to low-income families in the 2019-21 biennium.
- Conversion of 529 college savings accounts from a tax subtraction to a refundable tax credit that will adjust downward as income increases.
- Tax credit for taxable retirement income equal to 9% of qualified net pension income.