

Details of the proposed Portland sick leave ordinance:

- Workers could carry over unused sick leave to subsequent years.
- Workers could use the sick leave on the first day of an illness. [For unionized grocery workers, that would be a major advance: Under the current union contract between United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 and Portland-area Fred Meyer Safeway and Albertsons stores, workers have a paid sick leave benefit, but aren't allowed to use it until the third day of an illness.]
- Employers could not require workers to find a replacement worker as a condition of using the sick leave.
- Employers that offer at least 40 hours a year of general purpose paid time off would not have to provide additional specially-designated sick leave, as long as the paid time off could be used in the same way as the mandated sick leave.
- Workers could choose to work an alternate shift in the same or next pay period in lieu of using sick time — if the employer offers or allows such a trade.
- For absences of more than three consecutive days, employers could require proof that the sick leave was used for a legitimate purpose, such as signed documentation by a licensed health care provider. Other than that, employers may require workers to document illnesses with a note from a licensed health care provider — but only if they suspect sick leave abuse, based on a documented pattern (such as frequent sick leave absences before or after weekends, holidays, or vacation). But if employers require such proof, they would have to pay the cost of any verification that isn't covered by insurance.
- The ordinance would not cover workers employed through a union hiring hall, or temporary workers — those employed less than 240 hours (the equivalent of six weeks at full-time) in a calendar year. It also would not cover independent contractors or those who are participating in a work-study program.
- The City would contract with the Oregon State Bureau of Labor and Industries to enforce the regulation.



James Coon



Raymond Thomas



Cynthia Newton



Chris Frost



Cheryl Coon



Charley Gee



Nicole Bockelman

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ATTORNEYS AT LAW
820 S.W. Second Avenue, Suite 200,
Portland, Oregon 97204
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Open Letter to Our TriMet Passengers and Community

Over the past several years, TriMet's top management has repeatedly used budget woes as their excuse for raising fares and reducing transit service to this community. Then, they point the finger at the union workforce, blaming the costs of health benefits for workers and retirees. We believe that claim to be false; but, it is difficult to counter an agency spending over \$500,000 each year on PR to spread its version of the truth. **Now, it's time you heard the truth from TriMet's workers.**

We are the people who keep the system running. We watch how this bureaucratic agency works from the inside, we know where its skeletons are buried, and we are saddened by how dysfunctional it has become. Here are the serious consequences of that dysfunction.

TRIMET'S DYSFUNCTION PUTS SAFETY AT RISK. It's not just fatigued drivers, it's also buying new buses with enormous blind spots while forcing train operators to frequently drive without any side vision at all. It's a bus dispatch system programmed to cut off calls after two minutes, even when it's a driver reporting an angry man with a gun. It's buses and rail cars so filthy that they're making operators and passengers sick. And those are just a few of the many serious safety issues we deal with daily.

TRIMET'S DYSFUNCTION PUTS SERVICE QUALITY AT RISK. It's not just the reduced runs, it's also forcing us to issue fare evasion citations when we know fare machines are down. It's making schedules so tight it's impossible to guarantee our passengers will make their connections. It's reducing the number of bus shelters in neighborhoods where we serve the highest number of elderly and disabled passengers.

TRIMET'S DYSFUNCTION PUTS PUBLIC FUNDS AT RISK. It's not just spending millions on new furniture, it's also signing what the *Portland Business Journal* calls "the biggest office lease of the year." It's spending nearly \$2 million dollars giving new buses a "nose job" so they'll look like trains. It's having 161 managers being paid a base wage of over \$75,000 a year, 55 of whom get over \$100,000. This is to supervise a schedule-driven transit system service that can essentially run itself.

TRIMET'S DYSFUNCTION PUTS WORKERS' HEALTH AT RISK. People think our jobs are easy, but the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Labor indicate transit operators become disabled earlier, die younger and get assaulted more than people working in other professions. Studies have called it the most stressful job, resulting in absenteeism, chronic illnesses and high medical costs well into retirement. We have a small pension plan (not PERS), and only a small minority of workers that have retired early with full health coverage.

We are public servants. We are not perfect. Some of us are far from perfect. But we are two thousand people whose work lives are dedicated to providing you with the best service we can. Meanwhile, TriMet's PR department is using your tax money to mislead us all, issue after issue. What we ask is that you consider our viewpoint in the months ahead and evaluate the facts for yourselves.

Sincerely,

THE PEOPLE WHO KEEP PUBLIC TRANSIT ROLLING

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