



Labor agenda advancing in Oregon Legislature

PAID SICK DAYS

A bill to guarantee workers have sick leave is heading to the governor's desk. **SB 454** requires employers to provide up to 40 hours a year of sick leave, starting Jan. 1, 2016. The leave would be paid where there are at least 10 employees (or six, in Portland), and unpaid at smaller employers. The leave can be used for the employee or a family member, for care and treatment of an illness or injury, to attend a doctor's appointment. The requirement doesn't apply to employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement who are employed through a hiring hall and whose benefits are provided by a union benefit trust. It passed the Senate June 10 by 17-13, with only one Democrat—Betsy Johnson (D-Scappoose)—joining Republicans in voting no. It then passed the House 33-24 on June 12, where Brian Clem and John Lively were the only Democrats to vote against it. Gov. Kate Brown is expected to sign the bill into law, at which point Oregon will be the fourth state with a statewide sick leave law. The others are California, Connecticut and Massachusetts.

PUBLICLY-SPONSORED RETIREMENT PLAN

HB 2960 forms a new board to work on a proposal for a publicly-sponsored defined contribution retirement plan for people employed in Oregon who don't otherwise have a retirement plan in their workplace. The plan would be funded by payroll deduction. Workers would be automatically enrolled, but could opt out. The board would bring its proposal back to the Legislature by the end of 2016. HB 2960 passed the Oregon House June 10 on a 32-26 vote and was scheduled for a June 16 vote in the Senate.

BAN THE BOX

HB 3025 would make it against the law for an employer to ask applicants to disclose criminal convictions on an initial employment application (except where that's required by law, or for criminal justice employers). It passed the Oregon House 33-27 on April 29. The version passed by the House would have barred employers from inquiring about or considering criminal convictions before making a conditional offer of employment. But the Senate amended that to allow employers to ask and consider once they get to an interview or a job offer.

The amended version passed the Senate 21-8 on June 11, and the House 34-25 on June 16.

MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek (D-Portland) announced June 15 a renewed push to raise the state minimum wage—and remove a pre-emption on local minimum wage increases. Kotek's plan would raise the minimum to \$13 an hour by 2018. Currently, Oregon's minimum wage is \$9.25 an hour.

UNLOCKING A TOOL FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

HB 2564, a labor-supported bill to increase the supply of affordable housing, passed the House 34-25 April 13, but appears to be stuck in the Senate Rules Committee. The bill would remove a statewide ban on "inclusionary zoning"—the ability of local governments to require that a certain portion of new housing units be affordable. Oregon is one of only two states in the nation to have such a ban. The bill is backed by Oregon AFSCME and the Oregon Working Families Party.

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