



BRINGING WORKPLACE POLICIES INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

How Funders and
Advocates Won Paid
Sick Leave for Workers
in Oregon

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Paid Sick Leave in Oregon

Prior to the enactment of Oregon's paid sick leave legislation, approximately 45% of private-sector workers in the state lacked access to paid sick days. Lack of paid sick leave places unfair burdens on workers and their families; threatens workers' job security, particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable workers in the economy; and undermines public health and workplace safety. Under the state's new paid sick leave law, workers in businesses with 10 or more employees earn one hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked, or up to 40 hours of sick leave per year, while workers in businesses with fewer than 10 employees may receive unpaid sick leave. Oregon's law matches the strongest standard of any state in the country based on the proportion of workers who are covered.

When Governor Kate Brown signed the Sick Leave for All Oregonians Act into law in July 2015, the victory capped more than three years of organizing, during which advocates fought for and won paid sick days measures in Portland, Eugene, and ultimately the state capitol. Together, these victories have extended paid sick leave benefits to hundreds of thousands of new workers in the state, who no longer face the prospect of lost wages or worry about lost jobs every time they have a stomach bug or a sick child. The successes in Oregon have generated momentum for paid sick leave in other states and regions, influenced the national conversation on our country's workplace policies, and helped elevate paid sick leave and other work/family issues as prominent topics in the 2016 presidential elections. The many and varied efforts that led to the enactment of paid sick leave for workers in Oregon demonstrate that smart philanthropy can generate precedent-setting policy victories when funders commit to making multiyear investments in advocacy and to supporting a range of organizations—501(c)(3)s, 501(c)(4)s, and political action committees (PACs)—to influence policy. The following case study tells the story of these efforts and highlights important lessons for funders aspiring to bring about transformational policy change.

CREATING WORKPLACE POLICIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Forty-four million workers in the United States lack access to paid sick days. When one of these workers or their family members gets sick, they face a difficult set of choices: go to work and risk infecting others; scramble to find child care from a family member or paid caregiver; or miss a day of work and suffer lost wages or risk losing their job. In Oregon, 71 percent of workers earning less than \$20,000 per year lacked paid sick leave, compared to just 18 percent of workers earning more than \$65,000 per year. Yet low-wage workers are the least able to forego wages and the most vulnerable to the financial hardships of losing a job. In addition to placing unfair burdens on working families, research shows that lack of paid sick leave undermines public and workplace health, increases the risk of workplace injury, and contributes to higher health care costs.

"No one should have to choose between bringing their kid to the doctor and paying their bills," says

Andrea Paluso, Executive Director of Family Forward Oregon and Family Forward Action and the lead architect of the effort to enact paid sick leave in Oregon. "No one should lose their job for getting the flu. In this country, these are not choices we should be asking people to make."

The vast majority of Americans agree: national polling shows 88 percent of voters support mandatory paid sick leave. Yet despite overwhelming public support, the United States lacks a national paid sick leave policy, as do most individual states. The failure of public policy to match public will is due in great measure to the opposition of powerful business interests. Business interest groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, the National Federation of Independent Business, and the National Restaurant Association have not only opposed states' paid sick leave measures, but have also helped pass state laws prohibiting local governments from enacting such measures at the city and county level. In Orange County, Florida, Walt Disney World was a major political force in

Paid Sick Leave

BY THE NUMBERS

44
MILLION
AMERICANS LACK
ACCESS TO PAID
SICK LEAVE

79%
OF WORKERS
EARNING LESS
THAN \$15,000 PER
YEAR LACK PAID
SICK DAYS

88%
OF US VOTERS
SUPPORT PAID
SICK DAYS

46
STATES STILL
LACK PAID SICK
LEAVE POLICIES



Disney World helped block paid sick leave measures in Florida

preventing a paid sick leave measure that passed via ballot initiative with 64 percent support from going into effect.

About 10 years ago, advocacy groups across the country began organizing campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of paid sick leave for working women and their families and to advance paid sick leave measures at the city, county, and state level. In 2006, San Francisco became the first city to enact a paid sick leave ordinance, followed by Washington, DC in 2008. In 2011, Seattle passed its own measure, and Connecticut became the first state to pass a paid sick leave law. Inspired by these victories, advocates in Oregon, led by Family Forward Oregon and supported by the Rockefeller Family Fund (RFF) and a variety of 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), and other funders, launched an educational and lobbying campaign to secure paid sick leave for workers in Oregon.

WINNING PAID SICK LEAVE AT THE CITY LEVEL

Family Forward Oregon and its allies considered a push for a state bill in 2011, but faced a relatively unresponsive legislature in the aftermath of the 2010 elections. Instead, they turned their energies

to winning paid sick leave in Oregon's largest city, Portland, and later Eugene. The strategy was to push for local victories that would benefit hundreds of thousands of workers while building momentum for state-level policy change.

To advance paid sick leave in Portland, Family Forward Oregon formed the Everybody Benefits Coalition in 2012, with guidance and support from Family Values @ Work, a national network that supports state-based paid sick leave coalitions. The coalition brought together a mix of 501(c)(3)s, 501(c)(4)s, and other entities, and included allies such as the Working Families Organization, the Main Street Alliance, racial justice organizations, and unions such as United Food and Commercial Workers, Service Employees International Union, and the Oregon Nurses Association. Although these organizations pursue different activities, tactics, and objectives, they aligned on the common goal of establishing paid sick leave in Portland. 501(c)(3) organizations like Family Forward Oregon educated the public on paid sick leave through community outreach, media and communications activities, and public visibility events. Separately, 501(c)(4)s like the Working Families Organization and unions such as UFCW Local 555 elevated paid sick leave as a prominent

► Fair Shot created a humorous character dubbed “19th century man” who, in television, digital, and social media ads, offered his support to the candidates opposed to Fair Shot’s agenda, decrying support for higher wages and paid sick leave as “poppycock.”



issue during the 2012 Portland City Council elections, knocking on nearly 50,000 doors, gathering over 7,000 signatures in support of the measure, and pushing candidates to publicly commit to supporting paid sick days. The coalition also reached out to hundreds of local businesses to identify champions in the business community and to neutralize business opposition. These efforts were crucial to building the public support needed for a successful push for a city ordinance in 2013—one that could overcome the resources and influence of business lobbying groups. In implementing these strategies, the coalition drew heavily on best practices and lessons from previous, successful city and state issue campaigns. In March 2013, Portland became just the fourth city in the country to enact a paid sick leave ordinance, extending sick days to more than 263,000 people.

Also in 2013, Family Forward Oregon and its allies launched another paid sick leave campaign in Eugene. The coalition replicated the successful Portland formula, combining a public awareness campaign, business outreach, and legislative advocacy to win an ordinance in Eugene that extended sick days to another 25,000 working people in the state.

THE PUSH FOR A STATEWIDE BILL

Building on the momentum of their victories in Portland and Eugene, advocates decided to push for a comprehensive state law during the 2015 legislative session that would cover the remaining workers in Oregon. An earlier effort to move a state bill in 2013 had failed in the face of

opposition from business groups like the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association (ORLA) and Associated Oregon Industries (AOI). These groups have a history of extensive lobbying and political spending that has enabled them to wield significant influence in the state legislature. According to the National Institute on Money in State Politics, ORLA and AOI alone have made more than \$4.5 million in contributions to candidates and PACs in Oregon since 2000—and they are just two of numerous industry groups that have actively lobbied against paid sick leave.

ASSERTING POWER ELECTORALLY

Successfully countering the power of these organized business interests during the 2015 session would require elevating paid sick leave as a prominent campaign issue in the 2014 elections and the election of legislative candidates committed to creating family-friendly workplace policies. To win enactment of a paid sick days law, Oregon would need officials in the state legislature who owed their electoral success to their public support for paid sick leave, rather than to campaign contributions from business lobbyists.

Family Forward Action, a 501(c)(4), and its affiliated political action committee, the Mother PAC, joined with several unions and other 501(c)(4) partners to launch Fair Shot Oregon during the 2014 elections. The goal of the coalition, led exclusively by 501(c)(4)s, unions, and PACs, was to push candidates in targeted state legislative districts to support a broad economic agenda for working women and families, including paid sick days, an increase in the minimum wage, equal pay for women, retirement security, and access to reproductive health care. The coalition injected these issues into six swing races through activities such as door-to-door voter outreach, candidate forums, and visibility events. By urging voters to support candidates favorable to Fair Shot’s agenda, as well as by making direct campaign contributions to select champions, the Fair Shot coalition helped to unseat incumbent legislators with poor track records on issues for women and working families and to elect members who embraced the coalition’s priorities in all six of the districts in which it invested resources. This strategy required a diverse mix of funding sources, with unions and

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We are moving a mountain and we need an army of people raising their voices. Grassroots lobbying is crucial for the work we need to build a broad social justice movement. Given the limits on how much (c)(3)s can spend on grassroots lobbying, funding for (c)(4) organizations, which face no such restrictions, is absolutely essential.”

—ANDREA PALUSO,
Family Forward Oregon,
Family Forward Action



individuals largely financing the activities of 501(c)(4)s and individual donors supporting the work of the Mother PAC.

The work of these organizations during the 2014 elections altered the composition of the state legislature and established a strong mandate for legislative action on paid sick leave in the 2015 legislative session. According to Melissa Unger, Political Director of SEIU Local 503 and one of the leaders of the Fair Shot Oregon coalition, “The

message from the Senate President, Speaker of the House, and other legislative leaders coming out of the 2014 elections was, ‘We’re going to pass paid sick leave.’ That was the result of our presence in the elections.”

LOBBYING FOR A STATEWIDE BILL

Following the 2014 elections, Family Forward Action and its 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) allies executed a vigorous legislative campaign during the 2015 legislative session. They advocated for paid sick leave during hundreds of lobbying visits in the state capitol and knocked on more than 10,000 doors to urge voters to weigh in with their state legislators through phone calls, petitions, and emails. On July 13, 2015, Governor Kate Brown signed the bill into law, making Oregon just the fourth state to enact a statewide paid sick leave law.

“Passage of the paid sick leave law is incredibly important for Oregon families; we cannot underestimate the significance of the measure on their security and stability,” said Representative Tina Kotek, Oregon Speaker of the House. “At the same time, the law’s enactment and the movement that





The work that advocates and our candidates did during the elections was critical. They talked about paid sick days with voters on their doorsteps, polled voters about the issue, registered voters on the issue. Because of those efforts, members knew the issue was important to voters. If we had not done that work during the elections, it would have been close to impossible to move this bill through the legislature.”

—REPRESENTATIVE
TINA KOTEK
Oregon Speaker
of the House

How Different Funders Can Support Educational, Electoral, and Advocacy Activity

	501(c)(3)s	501(c)(4)s	Traditional PACs
WHAT THEY CAN DO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Limited lobbying ■ Nonpartisan voter education and mobilization ■ Purely charitable public education, coalition building, and advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Unlimited lobbying ■ Limited partisan campaign activity (endorsement of political candidates, campaign mobilization, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Unlimited partisan campaign activity ■ Campaign contributions to political candidates
WHO CAN FUND THEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Private foundations ■ Individuals ■ Public charities ■ 501(c)(4)s ■ Unions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Individuals ■ Public charities (support restricted to nonpartisan activities) ■ Other 501(c)(4)s ■ Unions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Individuals*

led to its passage represent a larger shift in the political environment—an increasing recognition that too many women and working families have been left behind by the economic recovery and that it’s time to start putting working families first.”

THE IMPORTANCE OF INVESTING IN MULTIPLE ORGANIZATIONAL VEHICLES

For funders seeking to achieve significant policy reforms through their investments, one of the critical lessons of Oregon’s paid sick leave campaign is the recognition of the different roles played by multiple organizational vehicles, including 501(c)(4)s and PACs. Funders must understand where they fit in the ecosystem and make the investments that will have the greatest impact, given their particular set of assets and legal restrictions.

The diverse and distinct efforts to advance paid sick leave in Oregon illustrate the unique and important contributions of each type of organizational vehicle. 501(c)(4)s were pivotal to the campaign for two reasons: (1) during the elections, they educated voters about candidates’ positions on paid sick leave in ways that are not permitted for 501(c)(3)s, and (2) they provided crucial lobbying capacity during the 2015 legislative

session—particularly for grassroots lobbying, which is heavily restricted for 501(c)(3)s.

During the 2014 campaign, the distribution of candidate scorecards and side-by-side comparisons explaining the candidates’ positions on paid sick leave were a way to draw clear and important distinctions for voters between candidates and to ensure that elected officials would be accountable to voters, rather than to the powerful business interest groups that were opposed to paid sick leave. 501(c)(4)s can do this type of voter education work, whereas 501(c)(3)s cannot.

Following the elections, advocates implemented a multifaceted lobbying effort to ensure that elected officials fulfilled their promise of advancing a strong paid sick leave bill. 501(c)(4)s played a crucial role in executing the lobbying strategy. Federal tax law restricts the lobbying budgets of 501(c)(3)s; and the amount that 501(c)(3)s can spend on grassroots lobbying—asking members of the public to contact elected officials to urge them to support specific legislation—is even more limited. While 501(c)(3)s did engage in some lobbying activities during the legislative session, achieving the scale needed to advance the

*While only individuals can contribute to PACs established for federal elections, unions and 501(c)(4) corporations in some states are permitted to support state-level PACs.



It's very challenging in our current political context for elected officials to take positions that they perceive to be against business lobby interests unless they feel that position reflects the will of the voters. Inserting the paid sick leave issue into the broader election conversation enabled us to show that it was."

—ANDREA PALUSO,
Family Forward Oregon,
Family Forward Action

legislation—as well as to build a grassroots movement that could sustain and expand victories in the future—required the involvement of 501(c)(4)s, which face no restrictions on their lobbying expenditures.

Despite their restrictions, 501(c)(3) organizations were also essential to the campaign's success. They led important coalition-building efforts to educate the public about the importance of paid sick leave and conducted research and legal analysis on the issue—all purely charitable activities that 501(c)(3)s can carry out without restrictions or limitations.

Finally, political action committees such as the Mother PAC provided an important vehicle for influencing the policymaking process, enabling advocates to channel direct grassroots financial support to candidates who were champions of paid sick leave through campaign contributions—something that all 501(c)(3)s and most 501(c)(4)s are prohibited from doing—and giving grassroots voices more power in the political process.

OTHER LESSONS FOR FUNDERS

In addition to highlighting the need for supporting multiple organizational vehicles to influence the policymaking process, the campaign in Oregon carries other important lessons for funders.

1 Funders must make long-term investments and seek opportunities to support multistate and regional advocacy efforts that have

potential for replication and cascading impact.

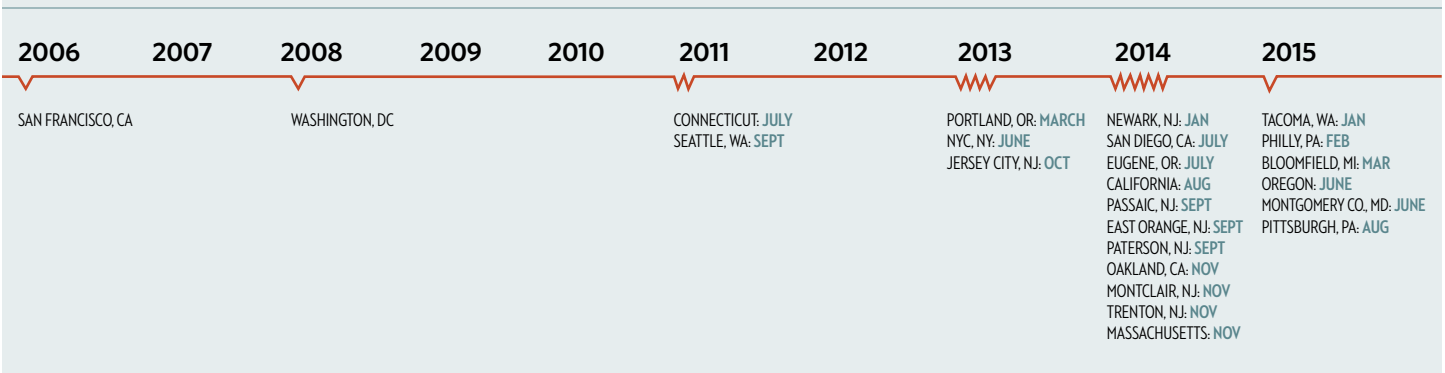
Transformational policy change is not achieved through investments in a single legislative session or in an isolated state. It requires a long-term strategy, one in which successful campaigns have a cascading impact, generating momentum for change at other levels and in other regions. Winning paid sick leave in Oregon required the execution of multiple strategies over a three- to four-year period, with victories in Portland and Eugene building a broad base of public support and establishing a strong standard for a statewide paid sick leave law. The policy wins in Oregon themselves built on previous investments and victories in Massachusetts, California, Connecticut, and cities like Seattle, New York City, and others across the country.

2 Funders can play a crucial role in unifying advocacy groups around a shared policy agenda.

In the case of paid sick leave in Oregon, advocates built a disciplined and focused coalition that stayed on message and set aside competing agendas. At pivotal moments when the bill's passage was in doubt, coalition members, rather than undercut each other, stuck together to oppose proposed compromises that would have weakened the measure. The Rockefeller Family Fund, while deferring to organizations on the ground, played an important role in creating a structure that encouraged focus and unity to advance the public education and lobbying efforts on paid sick leave. RFF funded a single lead organization, Family

Paid Sick Leave Laws Have Taken Off

More and more cities & states are requiring employers to give workers paid sick days



SOURCE: THINKPROGRESS

THE WOMEN EFFECT FUND

To scale its efforts, a group of funders has established the Women Effect Fund, a 501(c)(3) collaborative donor fund that will support advocacy campaigns at the local, state, and national level to advance economic security for all women and families. To learn more about the Women Effect Fund, contact Lisa Guide at lguide@rffund.org.



Volunteers celebrate outside Portland City Hall after the city enacted a paid sick leave ordinance.

Forward; requested that the coalition develop a shared budget; and gave Family Forward the authority to lead an education and lobbying campaign by empowering the organization to oversee sub-granting to its coalition partners.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

For Family Forward Oregon and funders such as RFF, the policy work on paid sick leave is part of a larger national movement and strategy to create workplace and economic policies that better serve the needs of women and families and that generate broader economic prosperity.

Within the state, Family Forward Oregon and its allies are looking ahead to the next full legislative session in 2017, with the goal of pushing for a longer-term paid family and medical leave law, expanded access to affordable child care, and a new law that will provide workers with more predictable and stable work schedules.

Nationally, RFF continues to invest in state and local education and advocacy campaigns that can build public awareness and momentum for sound policies, including a national paid sick leave bill. In the last 10 years, advocates and funders have secured victories in 21 cities and four states that have collectively extended paid sick leave benefits to 10.2 million workers. These successes have helped elevate paid sick leave as a prominent issue, including in national debates.

According to Lisa Guide, Associate Director of RFF, "Taking the momentum from public education efforts in Oregon, we should capitalize on the national debates to elevate the importance of ensuring paid sick leave for all American families."

As Paluso puts it, "We still design policy like we are designing it for the Cleaver family, with a full-time working father and a full-time homemaker mother. Yet fewer than 20 percent of families in the United States are structured this way. The great majority of families have to balance work with family obligations, and our economic and workplace policies need to catch up to that reality."

Drawing on national momentum and lessons from Oregon's paid sick leave campaign, funders have the opportunity to help bring America's workplace policies into the 21st century, thereby improving the economic circumstances of millions of women and families.

SOURCES:

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