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May 22, 2020

U.S. Senator for Oregon Ron Wyden
 U.S. Senator for Oregon Jeff Merkley
 U.S. Representative Peter DeFazio

RE: Liability protections needed to shield employers from litigation abuse

Thank you for your leadership in these unprecedented times.

As you are aware, a successful phased reopening of our economy will be hard on small and medium sized employers, those that our community and our economy depend on to recover. I write on behalf of the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce seeking your support for fair and reasonable small business and employer protections against litigation and penalties during the phased reopening of our state.

Reopening business and returning to work requires all employers implement guidelines received from our state and county public health officials to keep employees and customers safe. They need to know that if they take reasonable steps to implement this advice, they will be protected from opportunistic lawsuits. These liability protections should be timely, targeted and temporary to shield employers from legal risk.

We see our businesses working diligently to implement public health and worker safety guidance issued to them by state and federal agencies. As they move to adapt and comply - remodeling and retooling for a safe and successful reopening – they are expressing growing concerns about opening in the absence of assurances that will protect these good faith efforts.

Business owners are already facing many challenges. The fear of crippling liability should not be one of them. Limiting litigation abuse is essential to recovering from this pandemic and getting people back to work.

Your action on this issue will be one in support of our business community, and one crucial to ensuring short and long-term economic recovery for our state.

Respectfully,

Vonnice Mikkelsen
 President and CEO