

Interchurch Center, Suite B ☎ 0245 SW Bancroft Street ☎ Portland, Oregon 97239
phone (503) 221-1054 ☎ *fax* (503) 223-7007 ☎ *Web site* www.emoregon.org

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CONTACT: Kevin Finney, EMO Public Policy director
(503) 221-1054, ext. 204, kfinney@emoregon.org

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon applauds Oregon Legislature for passage of workplace religious liberty bill

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) today applauds the Oregon State Legislature for passing SB 786-A, a workplace religious liberty bill.

SB 786-A requires that employers provide reasonable accommodation to religious observance or practices of employees, unless doing so would impose undue hardship on employer. It also prohibits imposing an occupational requirement that restricts the ability of an employee to wear religious clothing, take time off for a holy day, or participate in religious observance or practice if such activities have only temporary or tangential impact on the employee's ability to perform job functions. It also provides an exemption for school districts and educational districts.

EMO Executive Director David Leslie, issued this statement, "Today the Oregon Legislature has acted to respect the diversity of religious practice in Oregon and to require employers to provide a reasonable accommodation for the diverse religious beliefs and practices of their employees. We thank the Legislature for taking this action, and we especially applaud the leadership of Speaker Dave Hunt, who has long championed this legislation."

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon joined with other religious organizations, such as the Northwest Religious Liberty Association and the Jewish Federation of Portland, in supporting SB 786A. Passage of this or similar legislation was part of EMO's legislative agenda both in 2007 and again in 2009. In both sessions, EMO submitted a floor letter of support for the legislation, which was distributed to legislators, and engaged in other advocacy activities on behalf of this bill.

Kevin Finney, EMO Public Policy director, also acknowledged the hard work of Willamette University School of Law Professor Steven Green, "Dr. Green, who is an expert on Constitutional Law in the area of

MEMBER DENOMINATIONS

African Methodist Episcopal Church ☎ American Baptist Churches of Oregon ☎ Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ☎ Christian Methodist Episcopal Church ☎ Church of the Brethren ☎ Community of Christ
Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon ☎ Episcopal Diocese of Oregon ☎ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ☎ Greek Orthodox Church ☎ Presbyterian Church (USA)—Presbytery of the Cascades
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) ☎ Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland ☎ United Church of Christ ☎ United Methodist Church ☎ Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

religious liberty, and who happens to be a member of EMO's Public Policy Advocacy Committee, has provided expert testimony and advice regarding the framing of this legislation, and he deserves credit for his important contribution."

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association of Christian denominations—including Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox bodies—congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians through community ministry programs, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, environmental ministry and public policy advocacy.