

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: April 8, 2009

Contact: Kevin Finney: cell (503) 250-0937,
Office (503) 221-1054, ext. 204, kfinney@emoregon.org

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon calls on Oregon Legislature to pass Family Leave Insurance Bill EMO delivers letter signed by more than 100 diverse religious leaders

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) today called on the Oregon State Legislature to enact SB 966 – legislation that establishes a family leave insurance program to provide paid benefits while workers take time off to care for a new child or a seriously ill family member.

SB 966 will give employees up to six weeks of benefits (\$300 per week for full-time employees) to help pay expenses while they take leave to care for a new child or ill family member. Oregon Family Leave Insurance will cover all employees who are eligible under the current Oregon family leave laws. The insurance benefit is funded through a two-cent per hour payroll deduction from employee salaries (about \$42 per year).

David Leslie, EMO executive director, issued this statement, “Currently many workers cannot afford to take time off to care for a new child or an ill parent, even though they have that right under Oregon’s Family Leave Law. By establishing a paid family leave insurance program, SB 966 will strengthen Oregon’s families and promote economic justice.”

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon also delivered to members of the State Senate a letter of support for SB 966, signed by more than 100 religious leaders from the Christian, Jewish, Buddhist and other religious traditions. (A public hearing on the bill is being held today at 3 p.m. in the Senate Committee on Commerce and Workforce Development.)

Signers of the Interfaith Letter Supporting Family Leave Insurance represented all regions in Oregon and included religious leaders from The Dalles, Ontario, Vale, Ashland, Medford, Grants Pass, Eugene, Corvallis, Coos Bay, Lincoln City, Astoria, Salem, Clackamas, Oregon City, Beaverton, Gresham and Portland—among many other cities and towns.

A copy of the full letter listing the 100 religious community signers can be seen on the EMO Web site at www.emoregon.org/pdfs/2009_PP_Paid_Family_Leave_Insurance_sign-on.pdf

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association of Christian denominations, congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians through community ministry programs, ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, environmental ministry and public policy advocacy. Please note: The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland releases all public policy statements through the Oregon Catholic Conference.