



Powered by Clickability

Ohio would pay

A proposed state ballot issue mandating paid sick leave suffers from a lack of clarity and the necessary vetting by varied interests

Published on Sunday, Aug 03, 2008

Ted Strickland finds himself caught between allies in organized labor and many members of the business community rightly outraged about a union-backed ballot issue that would mandate paid sick days for employees in Ohio.

The governor preached compromise last week. He sent a letter to business leaders asking them to participate in negotiations to repair the proposal and avoid a titanic clash in the fall.

That clash may be just what proponents, led by the Service Employees International Union, have in mind, a way to drive turnout among the left on Election Day. Few dispute the appeal of paid sick leave. The proposal would require all businesses with 25 or more employees to give full-time workers seven paid sick days each year. Part-time workers would get an adjusted amount of time.

Ohio would become the first state in the country with such a mandate. In certain realms, the prospect of Ohio taking the lead would be most heartening. That isn't the case in this instance.

The trouble isn't the concept. Many companies provide paid sick leave to employees. They understand the value in doing so. Rather, the worry is the political method, the process driven by organized labor, reflecting its wishes and desires, the views of other interested parties largely cast aside. The state shouldn't take such a dramatic step without the give-and-take of the legislative process, elected lawmakers and the governor sifting through a variety of views.

California often has taken the course of governing by ballot issues, dozens of measures presented to voters at one time. As a result, the state has become ungovernable in many ways. Ohio should resist taking even a short trip down such a road.

Perhaps Gov. Strickland can succeed in bridging differences. On Friday, he floated a possible deal. He must talk tough to his labor allies. The proposed ballot issue suffers from a lack of clarity regarding increments of leave, notice and protecting against abuse. It puts companies already offering sick leave at a disadvantage, barring certain benefit adjustments if the ballot issue gains approval. Thus, many businesses would scramble to act in the coming weeks.

That rush reflects just what troubles companies, the proposal carelessly making management more difficult, inviting harm to the state economy.

As it is, proponents have the necessary petition signatures to reach the ballot. Wednesday is the deadline for submitting petitions. Sept. 5 is the deadline for withdrawing a proposal from the ballot. Time is short, in other words. An intelligent compromise would be welcome. So would rejection of this measure in November.

Find this article at:

<http://www.ohio.com/editorial/opinions/26217529.html>

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

Copyright © 2008 Ohio.com