National corporations and their lobbyists are bringing their attack on local democracy to Oregon with SB 814.

Local governments are on the frontlines in the fight to protect public health and safety and set modern workplace standards. Over the past several years, cities and counties in Oregon have responded to calls for action by local voters with policies that help workers and their families and promote their community’s best interests. These local policies—like paid sick days, ban the box—represent the rising tide of Oregonians who are standing up for a fair shot.

Big corporations and their lobbyists see these policies as a threat. And instead of trying to fight progress at the local level (where they know they’d likely lose), these corporate interests have developed a coordinated national campaign to push state laws that take away local communities’ ability to pass the policies that big corporations oppose.

SB 814 is an attempt by corporate special interests to interfere with democracy and stop laws they disagree with from passing at the local level. This interference is at odds with Oregonians’ strong support for local control and our right to make local decisions that will make our communities stronger.
WE SHOULDN’T LET OURSELVES BE FOOLED.

SB 814 IS:

DRIVEN BY CORPORATE SPECIAL INTERESTS
National corporations and their lobbyists are violating our right to make laws that reflect our local values, make our work places healthier and improve the lives of working families. We shouldn’t be denied local control because corporate lobbyists and special interests are using their influence at the state level to block local progress so they can protect their profits.

NOT AN OREGON IDEA
Pushing state intervention laws to protect corporate profits is a deliberate national strategy promoted by ALEC—the American Legislative Exchange Council. More than 200 corporations belong to ALEC, which is funded by corporations and conservative allies including Exxon-Mobil, Philip Morris and David and Charles Koch. Corporate lobbyists use ALEC to draft, distribute and promote “model legislation” in all 50 states written to benefits its special interest agenda. In fact, the pre-emption language in SB 814 mirrors ALEC-drafted legislative concepts, and SB 814’s chief sponsor Senator Kim Thatcher is a member of ALEC.

AN END-RUN AROUND LOCAL STANDARDS
Big corporations have hired corporate lobbyists to do an end-run around policies they disagree with, like earned sick time or the minimum wage, so they don’t have to raise job standards in communities around the state. Eleven states now have laws that preempt local authorities from enacting earned sick & safe time standards. Eight of these state laws have been passed since 2013.

AN ATTEMPT TO STRIP AN EXISTING RIGHT
It is wrong for the state government to take a one-size-fits-all approach to law-making. The needs of people living in urban areas are not always the same as the needs of people in small coastal towns and rural areas. This is why local governments exist - to make sure that laws and policies meet the needs and values of the people who live there.

We need state minimums and protections for basic rights (such as civil rights and reproductive freedom) but localities should be able to improve upon floor-level standards. As long as local laws do not violate state laws, the state government shouldn’t punish localities by standing in their way.

Special interest lobbyists already have too much influence over national and state politicians, and now they are using their influence to come into our cities and towns and take power away from our local communities to protect their profits. They are violating our right to make laws that reflect our values.

It’s time for Oregon to stand up to big corporations and their lobbyists who are trying to stand in the way of opportunity for working Oregonians with this end-run on local democracy.