



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Chair Doherty and members of the committee,

For the record, I am Representative Joseph Gallegos. I represent House District 30, which includes much of the City of Hillsboro, the City of North Plains, and unincorporated Washington County. I'd like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 3026, which broadens Oregon's family leave law to include siblings.

Colleagues, I'm sure we can all think back to a time where we were sick or had a family member who was sick and in need of care. I'll give you a personal story that may put things in perspective. When I was a young child I had an allergic reaction to a pesticide when my family was in Indiana working for a summer. My mother sought out a local doctor to help. I was given some medication to apply and eventually I was fine, but it took some time. This was during a time when family leave did not exist. I was only 10, yet due to fear of job loss my family had to go back to work and I was left to fend and care for myself at such a young age. Granted, this was 60 years ago, and I am fully aware that things have changed.

Extending family leave to include siblings will give families in need another avenue to deal with medical emergencies. By allowing siblings to take time off to care for family members, parents, who are often the main breadwinners in families, can know that their child is taken care of while continuing to work.

HB 3026 is also good for business. A recent study by Rutgers in New Jersey found that providing paid family leave to workers leads to positive economic outcomes for working families, businesses, and the public. They've linked the policy with greater labor force attachment, higher wages, and a reduced dependency on government services. It is clear that we need to provide all family members the opportunity to care for their loved ones so that when they are sitting at their desk, or wherever their work takes them, they are one hundred percent committed to their work.

We need to add siblings to those who are protected in family leave law. We live in a world where "working families" means the entire family, leaving who used to be our caretakers in a position that is not good for family or business. Colleagues, I urge you to think of a time when you knew someone who cared for their sibling who was ill, and I am sure you will agree with me that it is time we add siblings to the definition of those who are protected for family leave. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

