

## **Testimony – for House Bill 2950**

**My name is Jan Dupont. I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Bereavement Counselor. I live at 260 Hawthorne Ave. SE, Dallas, OR and I work for Willamette Valley Hospice in West Salem.**

**I support HB 2950.**

**In January 2005 my husband's step-father died suddenly. He was an important part of both of our families and we were both stunned by his death. Both our employers at that time allowed bereavement leave. Having this leave in place provided needed time for our family to gather together, plan his memorial service and to attend this service. This allowed us time to grieve together and time to recover before returning to responsibilities at work. I now have two family members who are experiencing health problems and it is a reassurance to me to realize that family leave and bereavement leave are available if and when I need them.**

**In the last year one of my co-workers who have lost a loved one. I was able to watch as my co-worker was allowed the time needed to address family needs, to grieve and later return to work.**

**In my work as a bereavement counselor I have worked with families who don't have bereavement leave. Not having this needed time intensifies their grief. They often don't have time to plan funeral services or memorial services as they would wish to, and sometimes are not even able to attend those services.**

**The effects of grief; the physical, emotional, social and spiritual effects may last for a long period of time after someone suffers a loss,**

not having time to have closure with family, and being unable to plan and attend a memorial or funeral service may prolong this grief experience.

Bereavement leave, as well as family leave, when there is a serious health condition are important benefits which should be provided by all employers for their employees.