

Chair Lively and members of the House Early Childhood and Family Supports Committee,

My name is Emily Yates-Pollard. I am a working mom living in Eugene with my wife and our 2 year-old son (and our animals). I wish I could be there for the hearing on paid family and medical leave and appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony.

I actually was able to take paid leave when my son was born but my wife was not. She was only able to take an unpaid week off and then had to go back to work because we could not afford to lose her income.

I had a really hard time emotionally and my wife had a hard time knowing that she could not be there to help me. We had to make decisions based on money instead of based on what would be best for our family's well-being. I was fortunate to have 12 weeks of leave with full pay but that benefit has now been cut by my employer and if we were to have another child I would not get the same bonding time that I had with my first. These benefits should not be something that are based solely on the generosity of one's employer.

An additional stress was that my coworkers made it very clear that it was an inconvenience for me to be gone – leaving me feeling guilty about taking my leave. Our state needs paid family and medical leave for everyone – to ensure people can take the time they need to take care of themselves and their families, and also because when everyone can benefit from it and sees themselves in it, our culture will become more caring and sustaining.

Please support HB 3087. Thank you.