

Chair Lively and committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity share with you my testimony for the need for paid family leave.

My family and me live in Portland. We both work away from home.

I gave birth to my beautiful daughter and soon after found out she needed extra stay in the NICU. My husband and I were extremely stressed and heartbroken to be discharged from the hospital without Aubrey.

At the time, I was employed at a Portland nonprofit. I worked with at-risk students and led a team of youth workers. I had no family leave, no benefits, and no financial support from my employer. My husband and I could not afford to be at home to take care of my daughter. I returned to work after a very short 4 weeks of unpaid time off. To this day, my biggest regret is that I did not spend enough time with my newborn daughter.

It was such a time of financial hardship but even worse was the strain on our tender bonding time with our daughter. We deeply relied on help from family. I don't know what I would have done without my family's help. I worked part-time because it did not make sense to work full time to break even and pay for child care full time. Oregon has one of the highest costs of child care in the country and we felt that immensely.

It would have made a huge difference if we had paid family leave. I would have had time to nurture my newborn, take her to her numerous doctor and labs follow up appointments without worrying. And I would have returned to work with a different mindset and ready to work.

Chair Lively and committee, I ask you on behalf of my family and all the families that endure these types of challenges to please support House Bill 3087. Thank you for your time.