



To: House Committee on Early Childhood & Family Supports

Date: March 22, 2017

From: Amy Kessler, The Bus Project

Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Hack and Piluso, members of the Committee:

My name is Amy Kessler and I am writing on behalf of the Bus Project in support of House Bill 3087. The Bus Project is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that engages the younger generation in democracy and local politics by voter registration and voter education. We support the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act because it is good for women, men, children, and the economy. We work to give young families access to the ballot and believe that those same young families deserve paid medical and family leave to help strengthen our democracy and community.

This bill would promote family bonding, meaning that new parents would be able to spend a sufficient amount of time with their children and ensure that children have a chance at a healthy life early on. When we provide paid family leave, mothers are more likely to continue breastfeeding their children and fathers can remain more involved in their child's first year of life. In instances where the mother is the single head of household, the need for family care and a stable income are even greater. No mother should have to compromise bonding with her child over a stable income. Every new parent deserves the time to bond with their new child without having to fear missing out on income.

When parents are able to spend more time with their children, their children are more likely to receive checkups and vaccines. When mothers return to work within 12 weeks of giving birth, children are likely to have behavioral problems by the time they reach preschool age. Our children deserve to have their parents guidance and support, regardless of their parents income.

Paid family and medical leave is also good for Oregon's economy. When states expand paid leave, there are economic benefits that come with it including, but not limited to, reduced government spending on public assistance and increased labor force participation.

With only 13% of people having access to paid family and medical leave, we are not giving every Oregonian the chance to bond with their family and loved ones. Most other wealthy countries have figured out how to ensure all new parents have time to care for a new child and other family members with serious health issues. It's time that America does, too.



Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony in support of House Bill 3087, the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act. We urge your yes vote.

Sincerely,  
Amy Kessler  
Leadership Development Coordinator