



So all families can thrive.

March 23rd, 2017

House Committee on Early Childhood and Family Support

RE: Support for House Bill 3087, Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act

Chair Lively and members of the committee,

I'm writing to urge you to pass House Bill 3087, and include the definition of family as "related by blood or affinity." The traditional definition of family in policies like the Oregon Family Leave Act, does not include adult siblings, leaving out families like mine.

On November 16th, I was injured in a car accident when a vehicle ran a red light, hitting me on the passenger side, pushing my car through an intersection into a power pole. I was lucky to have been driving my brother's car at the time. If it hadn't been for his side airbags, I might not be here today.

My brother is my greatest friend, and closest family member. We've lived together since I moved to Portland five years ago. We share all of our household expenses down the middle, support each other's small businesses, and we've even linked our calendars and phones.

After my accident, my brother cared for me, driving me to my appointments when my mobility was compromised, and keeping me company when I was in excruciating pain and afraid to be alone. I had to stop working for seven weeks, causing my brother to lose out on business.

I was able to get some wage replacement from the insurance company, but not until six weeks after the accident. During that time, we depleted all of our savings on groceries and bills. My brother would get a little money, and we'd stretch it out for days, sometimes choosing between gas to get to medical appointments and groceries.

During this particularly cold winter, we had unexpected car expenses. We were down to one car to get to work and medical appointments. I took on debt for the first time just to make ends meet. I went back to work part time in January out of financial necessity, but my doctor thinks I'm only now ready.

If my brother and I had access to paid family and medical leave insurance, it would have made my recovery so much easier. It's hard enough recovering from the physical and psychological trauma of an accident, without being thrown into a financial tailspin.

I'm so lucky to have my brother. He's the only person who gives me the tough love I need to keep going when I feel like giving up. If I hadn't had him as my buddy during my recovery, I don't know what I would have done. But, under the traditional family definition in the Oregon Family Leave Act, and our paid sick time law, adult siblings are not eligible to take leave to care for one another. You have the opportunity with House Bill 3087, to expand the definition of family to include families like mine.

Please pass HB 3087, and include the "blood or affinity" recognizing families like ours.

Sincerely,
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