



March 23, 2017

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

On behalf of the Causa Oregon, I respectfully request your support for HB 3087, the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act. Causa is Oregon's Latino immigrant rights organization. Founded in 1995, we work to improve the lives of Latino immigrants and their families in Oregon through advocacy, coalition building, leadership development, and civic engagement.

Causa envisions a world where all people have the opportunities and resources needed to thrive. We know that our immigrant communities can only thrive when they have their basic needs met, including the ability to live healthy lives. Whether it is the birth of a child, the serious illness of a spouse, or the end-of-life of a parent--we all need time to care for our families. Caring for our families and ourselves is important work, and should not mean compromising our economic security.

Low-wage workers and workers of color are impacted the most. Workers in low paying jobs are the least likely to have access to the paid family and medical leave they need to help avoid financial catastrophe when illness strikes. These workers are disproportionately women and people of color. They are also the most likely to take on the care of an ill relative to avoid the cost of other forms of care.

Since the vast majority Oregon families do not have paid family and medical leave, this means that many families go back to work too quickly or go into debt to cover unpaid time away from work to welcome a new child, care for a seriously ill family member, or when the employee is seriously ill or injured themselves. Having paid family and medical leave ensures that people can welcome a new child or take care of their own or their family member's serious health needs without losing the income their family relies on.

The benefits of paid family and medical leave extend far beyond financial stability. Parents who take paid time off are able to bond with their children. Studies also show that a paid family and medical leave program will help businesses reduce turnover costs and level the playing field for employers while allowing workers to meet their health needs and caregiving responsibilities.

Causa Oregon supports the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act because no one should have to make a choice between taking care of someone they love or working to put food on the table. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony support of House Bill 3087, the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act. We urge your yes vote.

Sincerely,

Andrea Williams
Executive Director