



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

Dear Chair Lively and members of the committee,

Forward Together supports House Bill 3087, the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act (FAMLI), including the definition of family as “anyone related by blood or affinity.”

Forward Together is a multi-racial organization that works with community leaders and organizations to transform culture and policy to catalyze social change. Our mission is to ensure that women, youth and families have the power and resources they need to reach their full potential.

Whether it’s to welcome a new child, recover from or care for a family member with a serious illness, or care for a parent at their end of life, all families need paid family and medical leave, regardless of who they call family.

The way we define family in policies like the Oregon Family Leave Act (OFLA) as a married mother and father, children and grandparents doesn’t recognize the vast majority of American families. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 79.8% of our families do not fit the nuclear family model. Our families take many forms, like blended families, single-parent families, LGBTQ families, chosen families, intergenerational families, and multi-national families.

Caregiving expenses combined with lost wages can force families into poverty, particularly families of color. Nationally, family caregivers spend on average nearly \$7K on out of pocket caregiving expenses, nearly 20% of their annual income. Latino caregivers spend nearly 44% of their annual income on out of pocket expenses, while Black families spend about 34%.¹ Families of color and immigrant families are the most likely to be intergenerational and access kinship care outside of immediate family members. Over one third of Oregon’s children are children of color.²

LGBTQ families are also less likely to fit the nuclear family model. The vast majority of Oregon’s nearly 12,000 same-sex couples are not married, and 16% are raising children who might not have a biological or legal connection to one parent.³

The “blood or affinity” definition included in HB 3087 is the definition of family that the federal government uses to regulate federal employees right to work leave. This definition allows people to include close family relations, regardless of biological or marital ties.

All families need access to paid family and medical leave, regardless of who we call family. Family bonds are our most personal and intimate, and we should be able to define our families however the reality of our lives dictate. Please pass HB 3087 with an inclusive family definition that recognizes all Oregon families.

¹ AARP, “Family Caregiving and Out-of-Pocket Costs: 2016 Report,” (2016)

² Annie E. Casey Foundation, “Kids Count Data Center,” 2015

³ The Williams Institute, “Oregon Census Snapshot: 2010, (2010)

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