

Chair Lively and committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony with you.

My husband, two children, and I live in Beaverton. In May 2011, I gave birth to my first child. At 19 weeks gestation, she was diagnosed with a congenital heart defect and we knew she would have heart surgery shortly after birth. We were told many times that the estimates were a 1-2 week recovery and then discharge from the hospital. My husband put in for six weeks of unpaid leave from his job thinking that would be ample time to be resettled at home.

After surgery, our daughter suffered many complications and was in the ICU at Doernbecher for two months. At the five week mark, my husband had the excruciating choice to either stay at our daughter's bedside as she fought for her life, spending every valuable second with her, not knowing at times if she would ever come home with us, or return to work and leave me to navigate the ICU alone. He decided to extend his leave for the full twelve weeks of unpaid leave.

Our daughter finally discharged from the hospital and my husband went back to work, but we now had thousands of dollars of medical bills to pay on top of having zero income for three months.

In 2013 we suffered an unviable pregnancy for which I had day surgery to remedy. My husband was unable to take any days off at this time and I was left to recover alone while he worked to pay more medical bills.

In 2015, I happily gave birth to our second child. Because we never fully recovered financially from going three months with no income in 2011, my husband was only able to take one week of paid vacation time from work after her delivery. We had just four precious days of bonding at home before he returned to work. Recently, his company began offering six weeks of paid family leave and my heart breaks because I wish we could have had that time with our second baby.

America needs paid family leave and I love that Oregon wants to be a leader in this direction. I am urging you to please support HB 3087 so that other families don't have to go through the financial stress and lack of prioritizing family needs.