

Dear Representative Lively and committee members,

My name is Elwood, I am a social worker and I live in Portland. Thank you for the opportunity to share my experience with you.

When my wife Katherine was 36 weeks pregnant, I was diagnosed with stage four Hodgkin's Lymphoma and told I would not be able to work for a minimum of 6 months while I focused on healing. Chemotherapy destroyed my immune system. As a social worker in a nursing home, I work with folks who are often sick and as a result my place of employment was not a safe place for me at that time.

In anticipation of our baby being born, I had saved PTO, hoping to spend a month with him and support Katherine, my wife, after the birth. I had about three weeks saved when I left work because of my illness. Katherine is an adjunct professor and self employed therapist which means she has no PTO to access. We had saved some money in anticipation of her working less after the birth. The loss of my income put pressure on her to return to work sooner. She had to return to work when our baby was six weeks old, and for more hours than we hoped.

I couldn't work due to my health problems, and our health insurance cost us \$1100 a month. We had a new baby and all of the usual expenses. We used up all of the money we'd saved for the birth and other emergency savings. All of this has led to increased anxiety for our entire family and made it hard to devote our energy and time to parenting our baby.

I thought I was doing everything right. I was healthy. I had savings. I was working, had my masters. None of that mattered. In one seven month period I spent everything I had and my family feels worried and insecure. If my wife and I had paid medical and family leave, we wouldn't have been so financially stressed during this time. We could have focused on my health. We could have focused on the important first year of our son's life, building a strong attachment to help him be a loving secure adult.

Representative Lively and committee, I am asking you to please support SB 3087. Paid family and medical leave is critical to the stability of families when babies are born. It is also critical when people get sick, like I did, and can not work for a period of time. Thank you again for the time to testify.