



NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon

Testimony in Support of HB 3087

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NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon advocates for women and people who can become pregnant to have the right and the resources to make personal decisions regarding the full range of reproductive choices, including preventing unintended pregnancy, bearing healthy children, and choosing legal abortion.

To truly achieve that right, women and families need access not only to contraception to prevent unintended pregnancy and legal abortion without stigma, but also the resources to take extended leave from work time off work to care for their children and families without jeopardizing their financial stability.

Nearly a quarter of new moms are returning to work within two weeks of having a baby because they cannot survive without a paycheck, or worry that if they take too long they might not have a job to go back to. They've barely recovered from childbirth, much less had sufficient time to bond with their new baby and adjust to parenthood. In Oregon and in much of the United States, parents aren't even guaranteed a single paid day off when they welcome a new baby. Most other wealthy nations have figured out how to ensure all new parents have time to care for a new child - and other family members with serious health issues.

Women still provide the majority of unpaid caregiving within the home, whether it is for a child or for an elderly parent. Women are also the primary or co-breadwinner in more than two-thirds of families. Without universal policies like paid family leave, women continue to face real barriers to staying in the workforce and maintaining their earnings when family caregiving needs arise. This leads to both short-term and long-term economic insecurity, wage gaps, and wealth gaps for women and the families who rely upon them.

Paid Family Medical Leave Insurance is not just good for women and families, it's good for Oregon too. Expanding paid leave is likely to have economy-wide benefits such as reduced government spending on public assistance due to decreased economic instability for families. It has also been shown to positively impact labor force participation, because it makes time for important family care demands that often push employees (and most frequently women) out of the paid workforce. Higher employment and greater family economic stability equates to economy-wide gains - generating a larger tax base and increased consumer spending.

At NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon, we know that women make decisions about whether or not to become a parent based on the resources that are available to them. Reproductive freedom must include the ability to care for a child, as well as for relatives and oneself when recovering from injury or illness, without fear of losing a job or one's economic stability. Oregon is a state that values women, children and families, so let's work together to ensure that HB 3087, the FMLI Act, continues to support our citizens during these critical times in their lives.

Thank you for your support.