

Chair Lively and Members of the House Early Childhood and Family Support Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify here today in support of House Bill 3087 for paid family leave and medical insurance.

My name is Amy Donohue, and I am a Principal at Bora Architects in Portland. Bora employs almost 65 people, and in 2015 we made the decision to institute our own Paid Family Leave Policy, which offers 6 weeks of paid leave at 60% salary for an event covered under the Oregon Family Leave Act. We were spurred to action by the circumstances of one of our employees, a young woman who was going to become a single mother. She was in the untenable position of needing to return to work just two weeks after the birth of her child or trying to finance maternity leave via credit cards. Our leave policy allowed her time to bond with her son and return to work without added financial stress. Since then, five more employees – both mothers and fathers – have taken leave to care for their newborns. We have had employees needing to travel suddenly for the death of a loved one as well as a colleague who had emergency surgery and took necessary time to heal. It should be noted, each and every one of these employees has returned to work - ready to work - which has had a *significant* impact on Bora's financial health and success as we have been able to retain our investment in their talent, experience and job knowledge.

We understand that there are many businesses, particularly smaller businesses, who would struggle to offer this benefit. This is why a State insurance policy is so critical. Oregonians should not be forced to accept economic hardship or the loss of gainful employment for prioritizing their own well-being or that of a loved one.

From our own experience, we know that when you support employees in their personal lives, you create an environment of trust, loyalty, and dedication between employee and employer that is beneficial for our economy and industry. But beyond the economic case, providing family leave is the humane and responsible thing to do as a society. We must offer adequate support for people as they face what are often some of the most critical moments in their lives, moments in which they may well be vulnerable.

Everyone needs and deserves to have access to Paid Family Leave. It is time for Oregon to acknowledge the moral and economic imperative to do so and join the four other States in the US who have taken action to implement a policy.

Thank you.