

Chair Lively and Members of the House Early Education and Family Support Committee,

My name is Jacob Hunt and I've been a Portlander for over a decade now. I'm currently getting a Master's degree in Social Work at Portland State University, a process that has been amplifying the importance I see in politics as a tool for the common good, which is why I am writing this testimony in favor of HB 3087. But my connection to this bill is not driven by ideological agreement alone.

As someone who has worked in domestic violence prevention, I have seen the effects of cultural attitudes and policies that disenfranchise women. Domestic violence disproportionately victimizes women, and the most common reason women stay with an abusive partner is her economic dependence on that partner. Women are particularly vulnerable to that dependence postpartum, being as it is often very difficult to be well off when going to work and paying for child care, or staying home from work to care for the child. And infants are severely traumatized by being in an abusive environment, whether or not that abuse is directed toward the infant. I can't help but think of all the women who might have been able to leave their abusers after having given birth if they had the financial means to. And I can't help but think of all the children who would not have had to live their first years of life in an abusive environment if their mothers were able to find safety. The financial assistance HB 3087 provides to new mothers could provide this safety for mothers and their newborns.

This bill hits me on a more personal level as well. Kiara is thirty years old and is the sister of a friend of mine. She is also suffering from kidney failure. I have two healthy kidneys and am able to donate one to her. While I am likely to be healthy after a donation, recipients of kidneys often experience medical complications, and must take off from work to get medical attention. Without financial assistance in these times of being away from work, a kidney recipient is vulnerable to being pushed in to poverty simply from not getting paychecks she would otherwise have gotten if it weren't for having to take off work for her medical complications, or from being terminated from their employment for taking off work. As a recipient of my kidney, Kiara could use the help in HB 3087 in putting a buffer between her and poverty. And as somebody who will likely be giving his kidney sometime soon, my hope is not just that Kiara live, but that she have the financial means to thrive. I can't help but think of all the organ recipients who could thrive because of this bill. And honestly, as someone who has some personal investment this, I can't help but think of all the donors who would be happy to see their recipients thrive.

I know that HB 3087 isn't a magic wand that would make all of our financial and medical problems disappear were it to get passed. But it is a beautiful addition to the panoply of laws designed and passed by those who believe part of our job on Earth is to look after for each other and offer a helping hand when needed. My hope is that you will take the victims of domestic abuse, Kiara, and people like Kiara into account when considering lending a helping hand by passing this bill.

Jacob Hunt

