

Chair Lively and members of the House Early Childhood and Family Committee. My name is Katie Augsburg and I am very appreciative of you allowing me to speak today in support of paid family and medical leave. I currently head the Employee Experience function at XPLANE, a small design firm in downtown Portland.

XPLANE has prided itself on creating a great place to work, and incorporating a generous leave program with unlimited paid time off, plus maternity and paternity leave is part of our commitment to our employees. This has not always been easy, but we always knew that it was the right thing for us to do.

We have found that all employees regardless of seniority, position, gender or family status have utilized our program. Just a few examples of how paid leave has helped our employees that I want to share with you:

Learning her sister had cancer, a manager was able to take the time necessary to help care for her. And when she unfortunately passed, she was able to spend the time necessary to help her sister's family deal with such an incredible loss.

Dealing with a major health crisis, our CEO needed multiple leaves to heal and recover. His time away provided the rest and rejuvenation that allowed him to make a total recovery and come back to a full schedule.

A new mother on our team was able to take her full leave paid and get the time necessary to bond, rest and heal. We were able to retain one of our top performers.

This is a great benefit for employees, but it is also a great benefit for XPLANE. We have a turn over rate under 3% and have really happy, healthy and engaged employees.

That being said, we recognize this is a privilege that most people in Oregon don't share. We know that the difference between unpaid and paid leave for a new mother might mean she is unable to give herself adequate time to heal and bond. We understand that paid family and medical leave in our state can make the difference between paying the bills and caring for a dying relative.

XPLANE wants to be a leader in being a great place to work, but we do not want to be an anomaly. We believe that having a state-wide program that supports paid family and medical leave is critical to our state. In these trying and dark times, Oregon has taken a strong stand on the side of compassion and fairness towards working people. We as a state have become a bright beacon on how to live our shared values.

Now more than ever, we should push to do what is right even when it is difficult and be a leader where others choose to reduce the rights of our fellow Oregonians.