

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

My name is Luis Manriquez and I am a family physician who works in Portland, Scappoose and Enterprise, Oregon. I take care of families across the spectrum of life: from new parents starting a family to elders worried about burdening their family with health needs and medical expenses. It is an honor and a privilege to be a family doctor, but often times a families' biggest problems are not about healthcare. Paid family leave is one example.

When I think about paid family leave I remember my first year of medical residency when my wife gave birth to our twins: Javier and Frances. Residents don't have paid maternity/paternity leave and I couldn't afford not to work. We cobbled together paternity leave by using up all my sick days for the 4 years of residency and extending my training because it was important to us as a family.

It's important to mention that paid family leave is not just about urban professionals like myself. I work in Scappoose and Enterprise, both rural communities where families are struggling to make ends meet when they have a baby or sick family member who needs care. At a recent community meeting in Scappoose, I asked who had gone back to work before they where ready to after having a baby. All the attendees were mothers and every single one raised their hands. Very few workers have access to any paid family leave and even fewer have access in rural areas.

The health benefits of paid family leave are clear. Being home with a new baby improves parent/infant bonding and breastfeeding during the most pivotal time of a child's life. Paid family leave is an evidence based policy. It's good medicine but beyond that it strikes me that it is who we want to be. There is nothing more fundamentally important than family and providing space for parents to be home when a family is starting is one of the best things we can do to show who we are as a society.

Thank you
Luis Manriquez