

Chair Lively and members of the House Committee on Early Childhood and Family Supports,

I am here today to testify in favor of HB 3087.

I am the CEO and owner of The Hello Foundation, a for profit staffing and therapeutic services company of speech and occupational therapists.

Hello has close to 60 employees, predominately women, bringing millions of dollars into the state of Oregon each year, and is experiencing continued rapid growth year after year.

I believe this committee will likely hear from some business professionals about the financial hardship paid leave would impose on them should this bill become a reality for Oregon.

Be assured, I personally understand the implication of legislative mandates on the health of companies. I am responsible for attending to the bottom line and every decision leading to that line.

But today my critical message to this committee is simple. Business adapts. It is the primary function of good economic leadership in a company to continually adapt based on the best interest of business in relationship to the bottom line.

So yes, passage of this bill will be asking businesses to adapt.

But businesses will also have to adapt to a decrease in expensive employee turnover, increased ease of competitive recruiting, and sharing the news of a more compassionate and family-friendly benefits package.

Employees do not take leave to create a hardship for their employer. They take leaves because a hardship or a new baby has become a reality for their family.

In this moment we have the opportunity to bring some peace of mind to Oregon families in a financially responsible manner despite difficult times.

It is good for business to care about the well-being of all Oregon children and families. It serves our business recruitment, stability, and provides an economically healthy consumer base.

No doubt all business owners and advocates you'll hear from will explain they personally already go above and beyond for their own staff in challenging times. They adapt.

I ask this committee as the owner of a company that is predominately women, level the business playing field. Help businesses help their staff. Vote in favor of healthier and more secure families for all of Oregon and consistent business practices statewide. Someone's ability to financially make it through a challenging time shouldn't be based on who your boss happens to be.

Please move this bill forward. It's important to the health of Oregon companies, our potential for growth, and children and families in the state of Oregon.

Thank you.

Sharon Soliday
CEO & Owner of The Hello Foundation