

Committee on Early Childhood and Family Supports

March 23rd, 2017

Iris Hodge on Behalf of MSA Testimony in Support of HB 3087

Good Afternoon Chair Lively and Committee Members,

My name is Iris Hodge, I am the Outreach Coordinator for the Main Street Alliance of Oregon, a network of over 3,500 small business owners across the state who work to pass inclusive and equitable policy that benefits our local economies.

I have submitted written testimony from a number of small business owners, many of whom are restaurant owners, who are likely in the middle of their lunch rush, as we speak. We believe that this process for hearing testimony should be more inclusive of those who lack the means to attend in person. We urge you to find alternative ways to accept testimony, either in video form, or allowing for conference call options, so that more small business owners have the opportunity to participate in the process of public policy creation.

Today, I would like to issue our support for HB 3087. Main Street Alliance members surveyed over the last 8 months overwhelmingly support Paid Family and Medical Leave for their employees. I have been across the state and back again, talking to hundreds of small business owners who value their employees and understand that when medical emergencies arise, most often, it is the lower wage workers that lack the savings to help see them through.

HB 3087 is a simple insurance program run by a trusted entity, the DCBS, who oversees the unemployment program. Main Street Alliance members believe that the proposed program has been put together with the utmost care to simplify the process for employers and employees. This plan would require the employee and employer to invest at a nominal amount, for the possibility of medical and family emergencies. For small businesses, this is the way to insure these trusted, loyal, hard-working employees are able to care for themselves and their families, without the stress and instability that our current non-paid FMLA law works.

Main Street Alliance members are small businesses, the mom and pop shops that are the back bones of our communities. We believe HB 3087 levels the playing field with large corporations who may already offer these sorts of programs to their employees by letting these small businesses have a chance to provide for their most important business investment; their employees.

I respectfully ask that you support this bill for all businesses and their employees to access the time they need to care for their families. Our communities need the piece of mind now more than ever.

Thank you,

Iris Hodge