

Chair Lively and committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Jasmin Cross. Our family of four live in North Portland.

My husband and I had planned to be in a better financial place when we had our kids. When I unexpectedly got pregnant with our first son, I was working in the hospitality industry for an employer that exploited his employees. We were subjected to irregular schedules, lack of overtime pay for overtime hours and overall poor treatment.

Because I had no access to paid family leave, I worked as much as I could to save up for the time I would take off with my baby. Shortly after our first baby was born, I registered for school to access financial aid in order to help support my family. I went back to work but had to stop breastfeeding before I was ready to because there were no facilities to accommodate breast pumping.

My plan was to work and go back to school so that I would have more stable income in the future. Even though my husband and I used birth control, I got pregnant again, there goes our planning.

I employed the same strategy I used before: work as much as possible, this time with a young child, to save up for when my second baby arrived. I registered for school again to access financial aid. This was not how I hope I would build my school career and life.

Because of the lack of paid family leave, we stressed and overworked and incurred student debt. We had no choice because our family was growing and we need the money. But it also cost us a lot in the long run. Paid family leave would have made it possible for us to work more stable hours, would have allowed me to keep working, and would have meant I would have made better wages and more money over time. This is really important for women like me. Please pass HB 3087.