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Chair Lively and Committee Members:

My name is Anna Scharf and I am a farmer and family business owner in Polk County, Oregon. My family owns and operates about 2,500 acres west of Salem growing 10 different crops and providing seed cleaning and warehouse services to five other family owned farms and ten Oregon seed companies. We have approximately ten year-round employees including family and up to 30 or so during peak harvest, including the 5th generation family farmer, also known as my son. Two weeks ago, I was here urging you vote No on HB3087, but today I am here in support of HB3336.

As I stated before, I care about my employees; we have one employee that will be celebrating 40 years with us this summer and many of our employees are related to each other. However, my family business can afford another mandate. HB336 is a solution not a mandate.

HB3336 empowers and incentivizes my employees to plan and save to cover the cost of lost wages when they choose to or need to take Family Medical Leave. It also gives them the freedom and comfort to use financial institutions they are already familiar with rather than creating a new government managed fund.

As I stated when I was here before, many of the tools we used to have to reward our employees and encourage long term relationships; vacation time, sick time, longevity pay, insurance, etc. have been altered to accommodate and afford the mandated changes required for everyone. HB3336 give me an optional tool back in that relationship building toolbox. It offers me a way to voluntarily contribute to an employee's FMLA Savings account and at the same time qualify for a tax credit. This is a win-win for my employees and my family farm.

Again, I want to say, I value and care about my employees, but profit margins in agriculture are slim, out of state competition fierce, and the continued buildup of mandated state and federal requirements and regulations are eventually going to break the backs of agriculture and family farms in this state. I want to recruit and retain employees. They are a valuable part of operating a sustainable family farm, but I need optional tools not mandates to accomplish that.

Thank you for your time.

Anna Scharf
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