



April 4, 2017

To: House Committee on Early Childhood and Family Supports

**RE: HB 3087 – Response to Paid Family Leave proposal**

Chair Lively and members of the Senate Workforce Committee,

The Bend Chamber of Commerce represents nearly 1300 members with 27,000 plus employees of a diverse business base. A number of our members contacted us to share concerns about HB 3087, including (if not especially) the potential impacts on employees and customers. For this reason, the Bend Chamber writes to oppose HB 3087 for its unintended consequences on those most meant to help.

The members who contacted us support the concept of family leave and many offer versions of extended family-related absences. Combined with recent legislation such as minimum wage and paid sick leave, the addition of regulations from HB 3087 would compound impacts on both employer (particularly small businesses) and employee.

Our member's specifically expressed concern about the following:

- **Paid family leave would be provided on a first come, first serve basis. If or when the money runs out, paid benefits would not be available to those who've paid into the system.**
- Employees would be able to request leave to provide care for a broad range of family members, including "an individual whose close association to the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship." This vague wording would put employers in a difficult, legally vulnerable position.
  - Plus, the conditions under which leave can be granted are extensive, including any reason covered under ORS.659A.159, the statute that guarantees unpaid family leave.
- **HB 3087 is a new tax on both employers and employees.** The bill calls for a 0.5% tax increase on both employee income and employer payroll.

From a small business perspective, even those with only one employee would be affected. Leave requirements are especially hard on small businesses, because they have fewer options for replacing workers who are off.

We ask you to reconsider HB 3087 and oppose this particular statewide mandate.

Sincerely,

Katy Brooks  
CEO

Bend Chamber of Commerce