



DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF LANE COUNTY

To: Oregon House Committee on Early Childhood and Family Supports
From: Chris Wig, Chair, Democratic Party of Lane County
Re: Support for HB 3087/Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act

April 10, 2017

Dear Chair Lively and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the 104,014 Democrats in Lane County to urge you to vote Yes on House Bill 3087, which would establish a program to provide paid family medical leave benefits to hardworking Oregonians.

Among industrialized nations, the United States ranks dead last when it comes to providing paid leave for new mothers and other caregivers. Only 14 percent of US workers can access paid family leave through their employers, according to the National Partnership for Women & Families. The Oregon Legislature has the opportunity to provide this crucial earned benefit to millions of Oregonians by voting yes on HB 3087.

The program proposed in HB 3087 is structured as a social insurance program – like Unemployment Insurance, Medicare and Social Security. Both employers and employees contribute to a self-sustaining, state-managed insurance fund to be administered by the Oregon Department of Consumer Business Services (DCBS). Workers who experience a qualifying event – such as the birth or adoption of a child or a family member experiencing a serious illness or injury – can submit a claim to replace a percentage of lost wages.

Family and medical leave insurance is effective and affordable. The following observations of similar programs are quoted from Fortune magazine (which describes itself as the global leader in business journalism): “Paid leave programs – financed by payroll deductions – cost employees less than \$1 per week;” “Having state-mandated, paid family leave hasn’t hurt most employers’ bottom lines;” and “Lots of workers eligible for paid leave do not take it.”

Please contact me if you have any questions or require additional information. I look forward to working with you to create a safe, prosperous and enduring Oregon.

Sincerely,

Chris Wig
Chair
Democratic Party of Lane County