

March 25, 2019

To: The House Business and Labor Committee and the Senate Workforce Committee
From: Luann Algoso
Re: Support of HB 3031

Dear Chair Taylor, Chair Barker and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to share my support for HB 3031.

Last October, after a year of seemingly unconnected health issues — hair loss, a face rash, and depression to name a few — and many, many doctor's visits, I was diagnosed with Systemic Lupus Erythematosus. Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease that can damage any part of the body, and the type I have targets mainly my kidneys. My employer at the time that my health was declining was very supportive, and I was able to take two weeks of fully paid medical leave to figure out what was going on with my health. Unfortunately, I ended up leaving my position altogether because I was just too sick to keep working.

Looking back on that time now, if I'd had access to more paid medical leave I wouldn't be in the financial state I'm in today — I would've been able to return to my job if I just had more time to recuperate. Though I'm fortunate to have a partner who is able to support us financially, it's still extremely stressful and not something we want to be dealing with on top of my health issues.

So many people cycle in and out of the workforce because our current system makes it so hard to keep working when they have babies, or their parents are aging and need help, or when they are recovering from a serious illness or dealing with the life changes of a new diagnosis like I have been. This leads to so much stress and financial insecurity that continue long after the initial health issue is resolved.

I hope you can see how important a paid family and medical leave insurance program is for the people of Oregon. And it is critical that you pass a program that includes *everyone*. I worked for a small employer with fewer than 10 employees. Don't cut people like me out by passing a program that only covers large employers. Please pass the FAMLl Equity Act, with coverage for all workers, and pass it this year.

Thank you.

Luann Algoso
Portland