

March 25, 2019

To: The House Business and Labor Committee and the Senate Workforce Committee
From: Maria Damaris Silva
Re: Support of HB 3031

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Maria Damaris Silva and I had to move to Vancouver because of the lack of Paid Family Leave in Oregon.

I fully support the efforts to pass a paid family leave insurance policy that is administered by the state, protects and pays up-to 16 weeks of work, and is open to diverse families. My family is of mixed immigration status. My children, and I are citizens, and my husband has his residential card. I would like to share how the lack of paid leave affected me personally, and how it almost broke my family.

I did not want to have breast cancer, nor did I want to have a son with autism, and I did not ask for a husband who had to pay over \$10,000 in fees to the immigration system so that our family could stay together. All three major life events, were devastating, and shook us to our core. These events forced us to make hard life changing choices.

Two and a half years ago, I was in the hospital instead of eating turkey with my family on Thanksgiving. I had to go into surgery on November 22, 2016, as part of my third follow-up surgery from breast cancer. If you're wondering why I chose the Thanksgiving holiday to do my breast cancer surgery, it is because I wanted to use the three days of vacation that I receive as a teacher's assistant in the school district. Even with that short break though, I ended up having to take an additional week of unpaid time off from my already low paying wages (which I need) so that I could recover and not bleed at work with the children.

I had to take unpaid time off, and did so from 11/22-12/4. It was a stressful time. Nobody bothered to ask how those missing wages would affect me and my family. Nobody bothered to ask how I will pay to feed my kids, and pay the bills. Where will the money for Christmas presents for my children come from? Today, my future is uncertain, because I am not back to normal - and I need to have another surgery next month. I am very afraid of losing more of my income. Please advocate for family paid leave now and let mothers properly recover from tragedy!

Sincerely,

Maria Damaris Silva