

March 25, 2019

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Samantha Hughes and I live in Portland, Oregon.

Currently it is simply unaffordable for many Oregonians to take the time off necessary to manage and treat chronic conditions and disabilities because they can't afford to take time off. Particularly for those living paycheck-to-paycheck, this amounts to a barrier to care and an unjust financial burden on the chronically ill and disabled. Considering that half of all adults live with a chronic condition and nearly twenty percent are disabled, this issue cannot be ignored. The FAMLI Equity Act is a step in the right direction to ensure Oregonians can take the time necessary to take care of their health needs.

A missed day's work for many Oregonians means they cannot afford the copays necessary to visit the doctor or to afford their prescriptions. For some, it means they may not be able to make rent. However, foregoing care can have drastic consequences; including an increase in symptoms or triggering complications that ultimately result in more missed work and unpaid bills. With paid family leave, our citizens can have peace of mind taking the time necessary to work with their healthcare team without lost wages.

Without paid family leave, the status quo remains. If a worker takes a day off due to disability or chronic illness it results in a short paycheck, contributing to the poverty rate for working-age people with disabilities, which currently sits two and a half times higher than for people without disabilities. The FAMLI Act passing would ensure Oregonians with chronic conditions and disabilities benefit from more financial stability when they need to take time off.

One of the greatest values exemplified by our great state is our compassion and willingness to care for and protect the vulnerable. When our citizens must choose between paying the bills or going to the doctor we know we can and must do better. Passing the FAMLI Equity Act is how we can do better and care for Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Samantha Hughes