

March 27, 2019

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Shelley Reetz and I live in Portland, Oregon. I am writing this testimony in support of HB 3031. Parents should not be forced to choose between work and family. We have a serious situation in the U.S. where mothers and fathers are forced to go back to work shortly after having a baby because they cannot afford to stay home with their child during the very important first few months of life. When I had both of my children, I had no choice but to use up all of my paid vacation and sick leave to care for my newborn children, and then stay home without pay until we simply could not afford it any longer. Without paid leave, I was forced to return to work much sooner than I felt ready. This meant I had to send my children to daycare much earlier than I would have liked or felt comfortable with. When I returned to work, I had no sick leave or PTO remaining, so when one of my children got sick, it meant I needed to take work without pay to care for them.

It is crucial that parents are able to stay home with their newly born babies during the first months of life. This time is critical for bonding and development, and necessary for nursing mothers. When families are forced to decide between work and their children, everyone ends up paying the price. Providing paid family leave for parents to give the best possible care to their children is incredibly important, and should be available to all parents, regardless of income.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important topic.

Sincerely,
Shelley Reetz