

March 25, 2019

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kerala Taylor and I live in Portland, OR.

When my husband and I met 14 years ago, he did not have a high school diploma. He was going to school to become an EMT, then became a paramedic, then pursued a Bachelor's Degree, and just a few months ago received his doctorate degree in Occupational Therapy. During that time, we've had two children, and I have been the sole income provider for my family. I took 10 weeks off after giving birth to our daughter, 8 of which were partially paid through short-term disability insurance. When we had a son three years later, my job at the time did not offer short-term disability and I took 12 weeks off entirely unpaid. It took us years to get out of debt, during a time when we were also juggling high childcare costs (not to mention paying off the hospital bill for my son's birth).

Even though I'm a career-oriented person who has been working full-time since the age of 21, I was surprised to find that I did not feel emotionally prepared to return to work 10-12 weeks after my children's births. That, coupled with pure exhaustion and constant financial stress, diminished so much of the joy I would have otherwise felt as a mother of a new baby. It's time for our government and for the business community to recognize that family leave isn't just about providing time to physically recuperate from childbirth, but also about time for mental and emotional adjustment, time for bonding with a new human being, time for nursing without the headache of pumping, time for napping during months on end of sleepless nights... the list goes on and on! It's time to support working families for the benefit of our children, our economy, and our community at large.

Sincerely,

Kerala Taylor