



**Greater Oregon
March of Dimes
1220 SW Morrison St., #510
Portland, Oregon 97205**

The Honorable Jeff Barker, Chair
House Committee on Business and Labor

Re: HB 3031 -SUPPORT

Dear Representative Barker and Members of the Committee:

The mission of the March of Dimes is to lead the fight for the health of all moms and babies. I am writing today to submit written testimony in support of HB 3031, which will create a family and medical leave insurance program to provide an employee who is eligible for coverage with a portion of their wages while the employee is on family and medical leave or military family leave. This paid leave would be available to individuals to care for their own serious health conditions, including pregnancy and childbirth recovery, as well as others serious health conditions of a child, parent, spouse or domestic partner, the birth or adoption of a child and for military caregiving and leave purposes.

The U.S. is the only industrialized nation that does not offer working mothers paid time off to care for a new child. Most Oregonians will face the demands of having a baby, developing a serious illness, or needing to care for a sick loved one at some point in their lives. In those cases, retaining some level of income can mean the difference between being able to maintain stability and financial independence versus facing the challenges of having no income to support themselves and their loved ones. In 2016, only 14% of civilian workers had access to paid family leave, according to government surveys.¹

In Oregon approximately 1 in 12 babies is born prematurely (before 37 weeks gestation). Many of these families will spend the first days, or weeks or months of their child's life in a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). The social, emotional and financial impact for these families is devastating. Paid leave can allow families to be a crucial member of their babies care team while in the hospital and to be present and prepared upon the transition to home. Paid leave is also associated with better birth outcomes and greater duration of breastfeeding.

We urge your favorable vote of HB 3031 to pass the bill out of committee.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Joanne Rogovoy'.

Joanne Rogovoy
Director, Maternal Child-Health and Government Affairs
March of Dimes-Oregon

¹ Pew Research Center. Access to Paid Family Leave Varies Widely Among Employers, Industries. March 23, 2017