

March 25, 2019

To: The House Business and Labor Committee and the Senate Workforce Committee

From: Yadira Juarez

Re: Support of HB 3031

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Yadira Juarez and I live in NE Salem. A year ago, I was at work when I got a call it was my husband he was hurt on the job and was being driven to the hospital. He worked around heavy machinery and he cut four of his fingers on his right hand, injuring nerves and tendons. Shortly after I arrived to the hospital one of the owner from the company arrived. He talked with him and said "its not that bad you will be ok by Monday". As it turned out it was pretty bad in fact it required surgery and he wouldn't be back to work on Monday. The company was small with less than 10 employees and since my husband had worked, they're for 5 years he was an essential part of the labor force at the company. He understood how this would affect the company and how it would impact us. He valued the job that paid a decent wage as well as the peace of mind that this job meant to our family. I could see the pain and worry on his face "I'm going to get fired" he said. While this worried me the most important thing on my mind was his health and I told him not to worry everything would work out soon.

It took him several months to recover and because the injury and recovery was so painful, he was on strong pain medication that didn't allow for him to operate a car, so I had to drive him to and from every doctor and therapy appointment. I am a full-time working mother my income helps to supplement his income and our combined income helps our family have the financial stability one hopes to have. I was able to take 1 week off and then work from home for the most part the second week after his accident. After that it became a struggle and balancing act for the next 5 months. Leaving all the responsibilities of home to me was as well as all of the mental load to me. He was released to go back to work in September 2018 but when he went back, he noticed a difference in the way he was treated. It was subtle at first and as his workers comp was closed a month went by, he was asked to train new people something he was never assigned to do in the past. He knew they were getting ready to replace and fire him, he was training his replacement. At the end of a shift in late October the owner cached up to him as he was getting ready to go home. He said he was letting him go because fellow coworker's had complained about him he said "one bad apple can spoil the bunch" and handed him his check. He asked to have a meeting but he refused. They waited a month but they still retaliated against him for having an accident and for using workers comp.

Not having paid family medical leave effected my ability to step away from the work force and take care of my family. It caused a tremendous amount of stress and anguish and economic instability that we are still recuperating form. I want to make sure that others can take the time to address the health and well being of their families. I also want to ask that we make sure that workers are not retaliated against for using the programs that are intended to help support them during difficult times. We need paid family and medical leave to be a passed, with adequate protection for families please pass HB3031.

Sincerely,
Yadira Juarez