

March 25, 2019

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Fabiola Juarez and I live in Salem.

One of my favorite things about Oregon is the fact that people here care about each other. I value my family, and my community. I believe that Oregon is an amazing place to live and that we can always strive to be better. We aspire to be a state where everyone knows where their next meal is coming from, where families know they have a stable place to live, where we have the time we need to care for our families, and where those who are unable to work for a period of time are supported (something that could be true for any one of us).

Unfortunately, the policies in place right now don't reflect the needs of working families like mine. I am a mother of three girls. My firstborn developed Rett Syndrome as an infant. Her condition, our economic situation, and the lack of adequate health care in my home country forced us to look for a better future. We immigrated to Oregon, where I have always worked hard to provide for my daughter. One does not choose to live a life of despair and anguish. I believe that sometimes we are handed what God thinks we can handle. I have been handed many challenges: my first born with Rett syndrome, a life of physical and emotional abuse, and - most recently - a battle with cancer that I won.

I am a hard-working single mother and I pay my taxes. My wages are low, and because of that when rents or other costs go up, I am forced to make hard decisions. When I became ill with cancer, I didn't take time off that was not an option for me and my girls. Those days were among the toughest I have lived through. I know the physical and emotional pain of cancer and no family should ever have to be burdened by the damage it causes by the tears it brings to children's eyes and the fear it instills in their little hearts.

Families like mine need paid family medical leave in Oregon, this would insure that working families can succeed even when life brings trying moments. We're grateful for what we have and we need to continue to improve and grow programs that help uplift working families in Oregon. Please help me and my girls have a greater sense of stability by passing HB 3031 FAMLI Equity Act in this legislative session. I know they will give back tenfold someday, because their community will have invested in me and in them and their future.

Sincerely,

Fabiola Juarez