

March 25, 2019

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Margarita Biberos and I live in Salem. Just before Maggie turned 16 she was diagnosed with a chronic illness that caused her to be in and out of the hospital for a year. The stress, fear, and uncertainty that a chronic illness brings in to a family can be devastating and can tear families apart. Maggi is the oldest of my 3 children so her health and her well being, while they are my priority are not my only worry. I have two other children to care for. I am an agricultural worker by trade and work through contractors that offer no benefits other than an hourly wage that varies from contract to contract. I have at least 3 different contractors I work with throughout the year. So, I have no vacation time to use and no benefits. I easily used up the 40 hrs. of sick leave I had in the first hospital visit of many hospitalizations Maggie's illness required.

The stress was so unbearable at times and it took a toll on our family. I am a divorced, single mother with increased stress and burdens to deal with and not much support from their father. I am on my own to figure out how I will make ends meet with minimal financial support and no emotional support. The toll this situation has take on Maggie and or family has devastated all aspects of our life. I'm sure that this situation is not unique to me. For there are countless children at the Doernbecher's Children's Hospital that I'm sure have mothers and fathers and families that face the same struggles and hard choices I had to make. Do I go to work and leave her because bills and rent don't care about Maggie's illnesses or do, I stay even if it means we may not have a home to go to once she was out of the hospital?

No one should have to worry about missing work when they are just trying to care for their children. Families should be protected and supported so that they can be there for their children. Families with children that have a chronic illness like mine have suffered enough, the last thing we need is to be burdened even more. Financial instability should not be another worry, the stress and anguish these situations have caused are inhumane. I hope you do care about the Maggie's in Oregon and all the sick children who need family with them during such a scary time. I hope you can understand the impact that these situations have on working poor families like ours and I pray you do something about it, please pass HB3031.

Sincerely,
Margarita Biberos