



March 25, 2019

**To:** The House Business and Labor Committee and the Senate Workforce Committee  
**From:** Julia Goodman, Board Member, NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon, NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon Foundation  
**Re:** Support of the FAMLI Equity Act (HB 3031)

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Julia Goodman. I am an assistant professor in the OHSU-PSU School of Public Health, where I study paid family and medical leave policies. I am here tonight in my capacity as a Board Member of NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon. I am currently collaborating with researchers at the University of California, Berkeley, on a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funded, three-year evaluation of San Francisco's new Paid Parental Leave Ordinance, which is an extension of California's decade-old and successful paid family and medical leave program. I am also co-leading a mixed-methods evaluation of Multnomah County's new paid parental leave policy. Finally, although I started doing research on this topic long before I had children of my own, I now have a deeply personal connection to this issue as a mother of two, including one child with special healthcare needs. I truly believe that my ability to take leave saved my daughter's life, as I was able to witness her medical complications unfold in the first few months after she was born, and to be with her through weeks of repeated hospitalizations. My experience has also helped me to see the false dichotomy between parental and family caregiving leave, as her healthcare needs persist beyond infancy.

My research focuses on the intersection of health services research, population health, and work and family policy, exploring how social, structural, and economic factors influence maternal and child health. The beneficial effects of leave-taking for both parents and children are well-documented: paid family leave policies have been associated with increased breastfeeding; decreased infant mortality; improved postpartum mental health; and lower likelihood of childhood obesity, ADHD, hearing problems, and ear infections.

Beyond health effects, paid leave is critical for economic security. Families make decisions about when and if to have a child based on many factors, including their economic resources and job security. That's why having access to paid family and medical leave is essential to reproductive justice.

Increasingly, employers are discovering that paid family and medical leave is an important benefit for their employees. In our study of Multnomah County's new paid parental leave policy, almost three-quarters of employees who responded to our survey said that working for an employer that offers paid parental leave was "Important" or "Essential". We heard time and again how having paid leave allowed employees to heal from childbirth, to bond with new babies, and to be present for their families at a transformational time in their lives. We also heard that this increased loyalty to their employer. As one male employee put it: "I very recently applied for, interviewed for, and withdrew my name for consideration for a job with the state, because I want to have another kid. No paternity leave? Screw that."

Most employers do not or cannot offer paid leave like Multnomah County, so paid leave policies are critical for ensuring the benefits are accessible to all workers. In our recent study of San Francisco's Paid Parental Leave Ordinance, we found that the proportion of San Francisco firms offering paid family or parental leave increased from 44% just before the Ordinance to 75% in 2018. Paid leave offering increased in surrounding counties as well, but by a much smaller amount. Notably, this expansion in paid leave did not have negative effects on employers, employees, or customers. Few employers reported negative impacts of changing their paid leave policies, and some reported positive impacts. Overall, 78% of employers reported being supportive or very supportive of the paid leave ordinance, while only 6% were opposed.

Through my work, I hope to achieve a better understanding of how public policies like paid family and medical leave can have a powerful effect on addressing the systemic barriers to opportunity that derive from gender, racial and cultural disparities. I am incredibly proud that our state has an opportunity to lead the way and improve the lives of millions of Oregon families by enacting a universal family and medical insurance program this session.

Reproductive equity isn't just about making sure that people can prevent unintended pregnancy and access safe, legal abortion services — it's also about ensuring that all of us, women and men alike, can take time off from work to welcome a child into our family or care for ourselves or our family members in times of medical need without risking economic security.