

March 25, 2019

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

From: Robert Rossi

Re: Support of HB 3031

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Bob Rossi and I live in NE Salem. My father was given a diagnosis of having several kinds of cancer, diabetes, and many other physical problems. He went into a deep depression after being told that he was going to die in a short period of time. He gave my mother his life savings and sent her to Europe to see her family. He self-isolated. My mother could not live like this and she returned to the US and died of an (unexpected) aneurysm shortly after returning (toxic shock syndrome). I was working testing concrete and steel 3000 miles from home. I loved the work, I was good at it, and I had worked up a seniority ladder.

I returned home to take care of my father, who was in even worse shape. He was trying to work but could barely do so. The company that I worked for wanted me back but I couldn't return and I lost that great job: there was no leave for me. These were difficult emotional and financial times for me.

My father lived long past what he had been told to expect. Meanwhile, I could not find work locally and had to move to New York City---several hours from my father---and find work. The recession was on and I could not find a job. I was homeless and had to return to Pennsylvania take care of my father on weekends. I was able to get a job in skilled trades in the fur industry. My father ran out of leave and had to retire. The work in the fur industry paid very well, but it and other occupational hazards has led to certain health problems which I am now experiencing. My father moved to Florida, where his sister was living, but in his state he self-isolated and died a terrible death. I could not move with him because I could not afford to lose my job and risk having to start a third career during a recession.

Not having paid family medical leave impacted many aspects of my life and created unnecessary burdens for my family. We should all be able to take care of what we value most in life and not have to worry about becoming homeless or where our next meal will come from when we are doing what families need to do for their loved ones. We need paid family and medical leave to be passed, families can't wait please pass HB3031.

Sincerely,

Robert Rossi