



March 25, 2019

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

From: Francoise Kasongo

Re: Support of HB 3031

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Francoise Kasongo and I'm here tonight with Forward Together to express my support of HB 3031. I live in Northeast Portland and I work in health care as a certified nurse assistant. I am an immigrant from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I came to the US 18 years ago with my sister and my nephew so that we could live in a safer environment to call home.

Last year I was only 10 months into my CNA position when my mother fell ill. She lives in Canada, so I requested the unpaid leave which we know as OFLA to go take care of her for at least 2 weeks. Ultimately, my request was denied, so instead, I took vacation time for the extra days I was out with a combination of unpaid leave.

Although it was a touch decision, I chose my mother. I decided to leave to Canada to see my mother for a month and took the risk of not coming back to my job. My mother carried me for 9 months and then raised me, it was the least I could do. I couldn't just leave her by herself to navigate getting the care she needed, like doctors' visits and medicine to get better. **If we had a law like the FAMILI Equity Act in place, I could have taken paid leave without risking my job and used the accrual from previous work so that it wouldn't matter that I had only been with my employer for less than a year.** It was difficult having to make the choice between keeping the paychecks coming in and taking care of my mother, so I hope that Oregon will pass a paid family and medical leave program so no one else has to go through what I did.



I mentioned that I immigrated to the US with my sister and my nephew, who are the only relatives of mine living in the US. As I think about what I went through with my mother, I want to ensure that if my sister or nephew are ever in need of care that I have the ability to take time off work for them without risking my livelihood. The broad and inclusive definition of family in the bill will directly benefit me and ensure my family is not left behind. Please support the FAMLI Equity Act and vote yes on House Bill 3031.

Thank you so much for your time, your good work and for hearing this bill.

Sincerely,

Francoise Kasongo