



Oregon School Employees Association

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House Committee on Business and Labor
Rep. Jeff Barker, Chair
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Barker and members of the committee:

The Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) represents more than 22,000 workers in nearly all levels of public education, including Head Start programs, K-12 school districts, ESDs and community colleges. OSEA members perform many of the thankless tasks that keep Oregon public schools safe and functional for students, administrators and teachers throughout the school day.

OSEA supports the well-vetted plan for family and medical leave insurance embodied in House Bill (HB) 3031. I'd like to highlight just two of the reasons that a paid family leave program is so important to Oregonians – even those who can already access some paid leave under a collective bargaining agreement (CBA).

First, because even the workers who enjoy paid leave under a CBA are facing unprecedented life demands in today's economy. As an OSEA member from Medford describes it:

I am one of the “sandwich” generation which this bill will affect. I am legal guardian to my son who developed paranoid schizophrenia after severe drug use, am caregiver for both of my parents (still alive at 88) and my husband recently developed a severe illness that requires my caregiving. I have used nearly all my sick leave and vacation leave for this year, and most of it hasn't been because I am ill or on vacation.

When even workers who are relatively well-protected are struggling to manage all their responsibilities, the Legislature needs to recognize the real challenges that families are facing. HB 3031 provides a real and effective solution.

Second, it's also important to note that many workers today, including a host of Oregon educators, are already working two or more jobs to make enough money to support their families. Many workers, even in their primary job, aren't scheduled for enough hours to qualify for benefits like paid leave. Even when less-than-full-time jobs offer some benefits, individual eligibility and knowledge of how to access the benefits can be limited. What this really means is that it's clearly

best for Oregon workers to have the state of Oregon setting up a single, state-run paid leave program. By including all workers and having a single source for eligibility and other information, HB 3031 sets up the best possible paid family leave program for Oregonians.

As Oregon's economy continues to evolve in the 21st century, the best approach for working families – for all working families – is to stand up for the paid family leave insurance program laid out in HB 3031. On behalf of 22,000 Oregon workers and their families, we **strongly urge this committee to pass House Bill 3031.**

Thank you for your attention,

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