

March 25, 2019

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

Dear Chairs and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joan Morgan and I live in Happy Valley, OR.

The week my son, our first child was born my mother was diagnosed with Parkinson's. This time period was a blur but I can remember attempting to compartmentalize everything after crying to my husband and saying there isn't enough time to handle this. I don't have enough time. As I slipped into deep postpartum depression I became fearful of looking at the calendar and counting how many days until I was expected to be normal, healthy and back at work. I had just six short unpaid weeks.

As I began to heal, we adapted to what life looked with a baby and we also started to understand what life with an ailing parent looked like. Eventually, we welcomed our second child and helped my dad care for my mom as much as we could with overnight stays and well-coordinated trips out and about. This was difficult but manageable. Unfortunately, that all changed in December 2017. After nagging my dad to go into the doctor to address a lingering cough and fatigue, a chest x-ray revealed tumors throughout his chest and a diagnosis of advanced lung cancer soon followed. Our world was turned upside down, we had to make plans fast. Unfortunately, I didn't have leave to rely on – it was exhausted for the year after undergoing procedures to treat a chronic medical problem ironically exacerbated by stress. So every doctor's appointment was carefully scheduled (sometimes delaying care). Every assisted living facility I toured I had to do at night after work with tired and grumpy children in tow. We eventually placed my mom and moved my dad in with us. Everything is a well choreographed dance and often times I feel like I just twirl and twirl without a break. At the first of the month my husband and I sit down with our calendar and carefully review each and every appointment (oncologist, neurologist, physical therapy, occupational therapy and on and on) we have to factor in medication deliveries, blood draws and then of course our children's activities because we strive to keep everything as normal for them as possible. We have accepted that we simply don't have enough time.

Having a robust paid family medical leave policy in place would do much to alleviate the stress of having to juggle so many things outside of work hours.

Sincerely,
Joan Morgan

