

March 23, 2019

House Committee on Business and Labor

Re: Support for Family and Medical Insurance Equity Act (3031)

Chair Barker, Vice-Chairs Barreto and Bynum, and Committee Members,

My name is Cleo Tung. I am a Portland resident and volunteer with Forward Together and Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon. I am writing this letter in strong support of the Family and Medical Insurance Equity Act (HB 3031), which would ensure paid family and medical leave for all Oregonians.

In February 2019, my partner had a cancer scare that demanded immediate medical attention. What started out as a routine check-up turned into a highly invasive surgery that required around-the-clock care in the days following his operation. I am grateful to work for an organization that was understanding of the circumstances and supportive during the process. They provided me the flexibility to change my work schedule and take paid time off so that I could care for my partner when he needed me most.

For most Oregonians, however, this is the exception and not the rule. Far too many people in our state – particularly women and people of color – do not have the privilege of having an employer that is able or willing to provide paid time off or leave. Far too many are forced to choose between giving or receiving the care they need and maintaining their economic security. Whether it's looking after an aging parent, welcoming a new child, or caring for a loved one with a serious illness, every Oregonian should be allowed to care for their families without jeopardizing their financial stability.

That is why I am asking for your support of HB 3031. The Family and Medical Insurance Equity Act will ensure that all of us – not just those with understanding or supportive employers – can afford to take time off from work when a family or medical issue arises.

As the only state on the West Coast without paid family and medical leave, we are long overdue for this critical insurance program. Please support HB 3031 so that all Oregon families can care for the ones they love during their greatest times of need. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Cleo Tung