

Kate Brown
Governor



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In support of HB 3031: FAMILI Equity Act
Oregon's Universal Paid Family and Medical Leave Bill
March 25, 2019, The Galleria in the Oregon State Capitol, 6:00pm
House Business and Labor Committee and the Senate Workforce Committee

Chair Barker, Vice Chairs Barreto and Bynum and Representatives Boles, Bonham, Boshart Davis, Clem, Doherty, Evans, Fahey and Holvey, and Senate Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Knopp and Senators Golden, Hansell and Monnes Anderson:

The Oregon Commission for Women strongly supports HB 3031. Establishing a paid family and medical leave insurance program is an important step in the pursuit of equity and dignity in both the workplace and the home. The program benefits individuals, families, employers, and the state government.

Caring for a family can mean losing wages or compromising economic security. The United States is the only developed country—and one of just two countries worldwide—without a paid leave program of some kind. We do not offer paid leave for fathers, those who need time to recover from illness or injury, or those who provide care to seriously ill family members. Working to offset the national picture—California, Washington, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New York and Washington, D.C.—have some form of paid family and medical leave program established or about to be implemented.

Many other states are actively considering paid family and medical leave insurance legislation. In California and New Jersey, where paid family and medical leave programs have been in place for years, the cost has been minimal — less than \$1 per week for each employee. The small percentage paid into the state-run program each month can be described as pennies on the dollar for both employees and employers.

HB 3031 uses best practices from these states to create a paid family and medical insurance program that ensures working Oregonians will have paid time away from work to care for a newborn or adopted child, for themselves in the case of a serious illness or injury, or for a family member. Paid leave of this kind has been shown to improve health outcomes for babies and children, and by allowing more Oregonians to keep their jobs and remain in the workforce, universal paid family and medical leave will help boost the state's economy. In fact, many small business owners that are interested in offering paid leave to their employees, but are unable to afford to do so on their own, would gain the ability to compete with large corporations in employee recruitment and retention.

Support for caregiving is particularly important in Oregon. According to the Women's Foundation of Oregon, state caregiving costs are among the least affordable in the United States. In fact, the average cost of daycare in Oregon is more expensive than annual tuition at a state university, and elder care costs run upward of \$45,000 a year.

This legislation addresses paid leave as an important equity issue. The unmet need for paid leave is nearly twice as great among women, workers of color, unmarried workers, and low wage workers as among their respective counterparts. In addition, the expanded definition of family member in HB 3031 covers the realistic nature of family structures present in our society, as well as recognizing diverse types of care responsibilities. Importantly, workers using the paid family and medical leave benefit will be protected against any discrimination, retaliation, or other work-related consequences for using it.

The benefits of a paid family and medical leave program are multi-faceted:

- Women provide most unpaid caregiving for children and family members; they are also more likely to face barriers to remaining in the workforce and maintaining their earnings during periods of caregiving. This program helps to alleviate wage and wealth gaps for women and their families.
- Men deserve time to bond with and support their families as caregivers. Only 14 percent of employers nation-wide offer paid paternity leave. Paternity leave can promote parent-child bonding, improve

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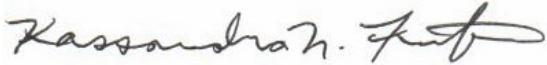
outcomes for children, and increase gender equity at home and in the workplace. This program establishes an equal playing field for both women and men.

- Employee benefit programs like paid family and medical leave increase employee engagement and loyalty while decreasing attrition, thereby reducing employer costs.
- Paid family and medical leave reduces government spending on public assistance, increases labor force participation, and grows consumer spending.

The Oregon Commission for Women believes the proposed family and medical leave insurance program ensures that caring for a family becomes an economic and workplace right for all working Oregonians. We strongly support HB 3031.

On behalf of the Oregon Commission for Women.

Sincerely,



Kassandra Krifka
Commissioner



Dr. Barbara Spencer, Chair