

**Testimony to the House Committee on Business and Labor, Oregon State Legislature**

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Good evening Chair Barker and members of the committee. My name is Maggie Humphreys and I am a campaign director with MomsRising, a national grassroots organization representing over 10,000 moms, dads, and family members across Oregon and over 1 million people across the country. We are here today in strong support of House Bill 3031 or the FAMILI Equity Act.

For the first time in history, over 50% of moms are either the primary or co-breadwinners for their families.[1] That means when moms go without a paycheck, it has very real consequences for families and local economies. I would like to share the stories of some of our members, parents from across Oregon who cannot be here today.

Lee from Yoncalla shared:

I was able to be by my mother's side during her entire cancer treatments. One of us was with her 24 hours in the hospital and home. What amazed me was seeing other patients having the same cancer treatments and other close to death medical issues we'd only see them have visitors come to visit them mostly 7am and then the other rush was 5pm (before work and after work). It's disgusting to allow our loved ones to face serious medical conditions and/or die alone.

And Paula from Lake Oswego highlighted the importance of a strong job protection in paid leave laws:

FMLA has been very important to our family as several of our members struggle with mental illness. As the primary breadwinner whose position provides health insurance for the family it was very important that my job not be jeopardized so that I could meet the changing needs of my loved ones.

A mom from Portland who wished to remain anonymous shared:

Being a new mom is tough. Being a new mom without paid leave, even tougher. Shortly after turning in my maternity leave proposal, the company I had been working for 2.5 years for terminated my position. The insurance company that I had insurance with went under, and I had to find new insurance 2 months before my due date. Then it turned out my employer had been misclassifying me as an independent contractor, making applying for public assistance incredibly difficult.

Paid family and medical leave should have been there to help this new mom, but it wasn't. At MomsRising, we receive stories like these every single day. We are facing a caregiving crisis in every corner of this state and across the nation.

Only 15% of workers in the United States have access to paid leave through their employers.[2] In Oregon, 67% of workers don't even have access to unpaid leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).[3] And, horrifically, one in four working mothers must return to work just TEN DAYS after giving birth because they don't have access to paid family and medical leave.[4] Other new moms are forced to pull a "Mom MacGyver" by cobbling together a few weeks of vacation and a few earned sick days (if they're lucky enough to have them) to stay home to recover from childbirth and/or welcome a new child into their lives. This is unacceptable and simply devastating for working families and for our economy. It's not just new parents who need paid leave. One in five retirees leave work earlier than planned because of family caregiving responsibilities.[5]

Meanwhile, it is very clear that paid family leave doesn't just boost families; it's good for the economy too. Studies show that paid leave improves employee retention and lowers employers' turnover costs, increases worker productivity, improves employee loyalty and morale, allows smaller businesses to compete with larger companies for the best talent, and heightens American businesses' competitiveness in a global economy.[6]

Paid family and medical leave boosts families, businesses, communities, and our economy. It's a win-win. On behalf of our 10,000 Oregon members, we urge you to take swift action this year to pass the FAMLI Equity Act. Thank you.

**Sources:**

[1] [Center for American Progress, 2016: Breadwinning moms are increasingly the new norms](#)

[2] [Paid Family and Medical Leave: An Overview, National Partnership](#)

[3] [National Women's Law Center: Paid Leave Means a Stronger Oregon](#)

[4] [Family and Medical Leave in 2012, Abt Associates Inc. for the U.S. Department of Labor, 2014](#)

[5] [AARP: Understanding the Impact of Family Caregiving on Work, 2012](#)

[6] [National Partnership for Women and Families, PFML: Good for Business, 2015](#)