



House Business and Labor Committee and the Senate Workforce Committee
Re: HB 3031, Relating to family medical leave benefits

March 25, 2019

Dear Chairs and members of the committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 3031, the FAMLI Equity Act. My name is Jenny Lee, and I am the Advocacy Director at the Coalition of Communities of Color. The Coalition of Communities of Color is an alliance of culturally-specific community based organizations with representation from the following communities of color: African, African American, Asian, Latino, Middle Eastern, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Slavic. Our mission is to address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities; and to organize our communities for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice and prosperity.

The FAMLI Equity Act would advance economic justice and benefits for working families and address disparities facing families of color. The bill would increase the social and economic power for Oregonians to make healthy decisions for themselves and their families without fear of job loss or discrimination. Oregon's existing unpaid family leave is unaffordable for many low-income families. All too often, families in Oregon are forced to choose between economic security and caring for their own health or the health of a family member.

Paid family and medical leave will help address the specific barriers and economic and health disparities faced by communities of color, allowing families to give or get the care they need without making it more difficult to support themselves financially. And because families in Oregon are diverse, the bill includes an expanded family definition that includes chosen families, multigenerational families, and extended families, which reflect the realities of communities of color.

Programs like paid family and medical leave help those who are low income and experience multiple marginalizations, including women, people of color, single mothers, immigrants, and people with disabilities or those living with chronic illnesses. Importantly, the benefits proposed in this bill are distributed progressively in order to support those who need income replacement the most, and employers are required to match the contributions of employees into the fund. In addition, the bill includes benefits for extended family, LGBTQ folks, Oregon residents living here under the Compact of Free Association, and those who are undocumented but receive an Oregon paycheck.

It's time for Oregon to become the seventh state in the country to create a mechanism to fund paid leave for workers who experience illness, need to care for a sick family member, or





welcome a new baby or adopted child. Oregon will be stronger when all families can take the time they need to care for each other. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in strong favor of HB 3031, the FAMILI Equity Act.

Respectfully,

Jenny Lee
Advocacy Director
Coalition of Communities of Color

