



clackamas women's services  
256 Warner Milne Road, Oregon City, OR 97045  
(503) 655-8600 | www.cwsor.org

March 25, 2019

Re: Support for HB 3031

Dear Chair Barker, Vice Chairs Barreto and Bynum and Members of the Committee,

I am the executive director of Clackamas Women's Services (CWS), a community-based non-profit that provides critical services — including emergency and confidential shelter, a 24/7 crisis line, mental health counseling, support groups, legal advocacy, and community education — to survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence, elder abuse, stalking and human trafficking. **On behalf of CWS and the vulnerable families, individuals and children we serve, and our valued employees I urged you to support HB 3031.**

CWS was one of the first nonprofit organizations in our community of our size and type to offer a fully paid parental leave policy. Without question this policy has improved the productivity and commitment from our workforce and contributed positively to the well-being of our employees. As a result of this investment we have stronger retention rates for employees seeking to start or expand their families. The implementation of this policy was not entirely easy, as we had to find additional revenue to accomplish it. However, we adapted quickly and it has been a game-changer for our team. We enthusiastically support the idea of expanding this benefit to encompass family leave and believe that HB 3031 provides a sustainable funding mechanism to support this effort.

Our dedicated employees work tirelessly, with nonprofit wages, to support individuals and families in crisis in our community. Their ability to care for survivors experiencing trauma is profoundly enhanced when they are supported in their efforts to provide critical care for their family members. Our employees are caregivers in their jobs and should be able to provide sustainable care for their family members. HB 3031 provides a thoughtful solution.

Furthermore, and perhaps most critical, HB 3031 will be a positive step for the victims/survivors we serve. Many of whom are working diligently to reenter the workforce after horrendous abuse or who are struggling to maintain employment while also healing from the trauma they experienced. When you add in the need to care for a family member that results in a loss of pay it places survivors back into a very vulnerable and precarious situation. We know that one of the top reasons survivors are forced back into an abusive relationship is a lack of financial stability. The FAMLI Equity Act will work to mitigate this issue.

As an employer and as an advocate for victims of domestic and sexual violence I urge you to support HB 3031.

Sincerely,



Melissa Erlbaum, MPA  
Executive Director