

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Soumya. I am an engineer and live in Multnomah County, Portland, OR and I am writing in support of HB 3031, the FAMILY Equity Act

My husband and I are fortunate enough to work for large companies that support parental leave. With both my children, we qualified for a couple of months of paid bonding leave with our children. Without this, I am certain that I could not have gone back to work. Being a Stay at Home mom/dad should always be a choice for families and it should never be forced on us. Having no leave or only having unpaid leave unfortunately forces families to make difficult choices of either quitting to take care of a new born infant or going with a less than perfect choice for care for our newborns. Just being home for a few months with the baby and getting used to a new normal helped me get back to work and be as productive as I used to be before the baby was born. If i had been forced to go back to work within two weeks of babies birth, I would have been too exhausted to be productive and too distracted about baby's well being to do any good work.

Parental leave (both maternity and paternity) should be a given in the first world. We shouldn't have to fight for this right.

I strongly believe that extraordinary diverse talent goes wasted because women do not receive the needed support in the form of paid leave in the first year of baby's life.

Paid paternity and maternity shouldn't be a perk only available to a select view. It needs to be universal.