
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon

June 11, 2019

Chair Holvey, Vice-Chairs Williamson and Wilson, and Members of the House Committee on Rules:

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon respectfully requests the committee's support of House Bill 2005 -3 because every Oregonian should be able to give or get the care they need without risking their ability to pay the bills. Whether it is birth or an adoption, needing to care for a sick loved one, or getting care yourself, almost everyone will need to take time off from work for a family or medical issue. Yet, Oregon does not have a universal paid family and medical leave policy in place, which means the majority of Oregonians cannot actually afford to take time off when they need to.

The need for paid family and medical leave is apparent. One in four moms in the United States returns to work within two weeks of having a baby. Two out of three workers between the ages of 45 and 74 care for an aging or other adult—many while juggling the responsibilities of raising and caring for their own young children. Women are overwhelmingly charged with the responsibility of caregiving. Paid family and medical leave is not just about family values; it is a gender equity issue. Paid family and medical leave will make it easier for women to stay in the workforce, support their families while caregiving, improve their ability to stay financially afloat, and ultimately help reduce the gap between what men and women are paid. Furthermore, studies show that access to paid parental leave can reduce infant mortality rates by as much as 10%.

Paid family and medical leave will also help to address some of the barriers communities of color face. A long history of rigged rules and a broken system has resulted in communities of color being more likely to have worse health outcomes and to work in low-paying jobs. The unmet need for paid family leave is nearly twice as great among women of color and low-wage workers. HB 2005 -3 would allow communities of color the ability to get or give the care they need without jeopardizing, or worsening, their ability to support themselves financially. HB 2005 -3's progressive wage replacement formula ensures that every worker, including low-income workers, is able to take the time they need without sacrificing their economic security.

As a member of the Fair Shot and Time to Care Oregon Coalition, PPAO is committed to civil rights, social justice and reproductive rights for all. We recognize that the fight for justice and equity does not end with having the right to make reproductive and sexual health decisions. Individuals must have the power and resources necessary to care for themselves and their families, in safe environments and healthy communities. It is time to join the six other states and Washington D.C. with paid family and medical leave. It is time to stop forcing hardworking Oregonians to choose between putting food on the table and taking care of their family. It is time to care. We strongly urge the committee to support HB 2005 -3.

Sincerely,

Emily McLain
Executive Director
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon