

Testimony HB 2005: Paid Family Medical Leave

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House Rules Committee

Submitted by John Mullin on behalf of AARP Oregon

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AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With 510,000 members in Oregon, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families with a focus on health security, financial stability, and personal fulfillment. An important priority for AARP this session is to enact paid family medical leave for Oregon.

AARP Oregon has been working all session with the Time to Care Coalition in support of a critically important program – paid family medical leave (PFML). We very much appreciate the work all parties did to arrive at a good compromise bill, HB 2005.

AARP has previously testified on HB 3031, another PFML bill. Although HB 2005 has become the vehicle for PFML, I would like to recall the March 22, 2019 testimony of our Volunteer State President Elaine Friesen-Strang:

Without paid leave and flexible workplace policies to support family caregivers, vulnerable seniors will increasingly be forced into taxpayer supported long term care settings which would add even more pressure on Oregon's already strained budget. This is a fair, common-sense solution: everyone contributes, everyone benefits. It allows Oregonians to work and care for themselves and their families.

This focus for AARP Oregon remains the same. I have testified a number of times this session noting that there are about 470,000 family caregivers in Oregon, constituting a significant portion of the population. AARP estimates that about 60 percent of that group is still in the workforce. That is one of the reasons PFML is so important, and the benefit is mutual. On the employer end, business interests know that workers of all ages are essential in the workforce, and older workers bring experience and expertise. Paid Family Medical Leave benefits the caregiver

employee by helping them to manage a difficult but essential role. Having non consecutive time off flexibility makes sense for caregivers.

To be clear, AARP is supportive of this benefit for all workers. There are many other examples of need for paid time off including birth, adoption, or a health crisis. That is why we look to fully supporting HB 2005 for all Oregon workers and their employers.

At the time of the creation of this testimony, the amendment for HB 2005 was not available for review. But as we currently understand the basic framework, AARP Oregon is prepared to fully support enacting this important legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.