

March 25, 2019

To: The House Business and Labor Committee and the Senate Workforce Committee
From: Christina Mae Ketcham
Re: Support of HB 3031

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christina Ketcham and I live in Astoria Oregon.

I am writing in support of Paid Family Medical Leave Insurance for all Oregonians. I believe that there are inevitable life situations that occur, and people will eventually need to take time off from work to care for a family member, a new born baby, or themselves. People should be able to do that without fear of financial ruin. I, myself, have used family leave twice, as allowed by my employment contract.

The first time to get to know my newborn twins, and to support their mother. We were very much relieved to know our jobs would be available to us as we were ready to return to work again.

The second time I had an open heart surgery and was afforded Family Medical Leave to accommodate my Surgery and Cardiovascular Rehabilitation. I was able to return to work with no restrictions. Unfortunately, the leave was not paid. I was forced to use my accumulated sick leave to maintain my pay while on unpaid medical leave. I felt fortunate to have that sick time banked - but wondered what I would have done if I had to use that sick time for something else that year - like a cold, a migraine, or the death of a family member. Losing my job or pay over a major health concern would have been devastating to myself and my family. Sick time should be for short term sick days, and paid leave should be available for long term medical situation like open heart surgery.

Oregon workers, organizations, mothers, and families, are working to pass legislation to create a paid family and medical leave insurance program that ensures every working Oregonian will have access to paid time away from work to welcome a new child, to recover from a serious illness or to care for a loved one recovering from a serious illness. This program will help keep Oregon families together and address disparities, especially among minority populations.

I ask you to actively work toward the success and implementation of HB 3031; Paid Medical Leave Program in Oregon that covers 12-26 weeks of protected time off, is open to diverse families, with partial wage replacement, and that is administered by the state this 2019 Legislative Session, by moving this bill forward.

Respectfully,

Christina Mae Ketcham