



To: Senate Workforce and House Business and Labor

From: Peter Emerson, Co-Owner, Bipartisan Cafe

Date: March 25, 2019

Re: Letter in Support of HB 3031

Chair Taylor, Chair Barker, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Peter Emerson and I co-own Bipartisan Café. I'm writing today to tell you why, I believe, it is time for working Oregonians to have the time they need to care for themselves and their loved ones during a health crisis or the birth of a child.

We've owned our café in the Montavilla neighborhood, for 11 years now but prior to us opening our business, we both worked, for many years, at other restaurants and cafes. While pregnant with our first daughter, my wife worked until she was 8 months along. She was miserable being on her feet for so many hours. Customers would ask her if she was going to have the baby right there, because her discomfort was so obvious. I felt terrible but there was nothing I could do. Neither of us had paid family and medical leave.

At Bipartisan, we employ lots of younger folks, many women. I want to be able to provide my employees with the benefits my children's mother did not have, if they choose to have children of their own. But not just if they are giving birth themselves. I want dads to be able to have time with their children too. That's why I support The FAMLI Equity Act.

The FAMLI Equity Act makes sense to me, as a small business owner. I think of my employees like family and I want to be able to provide these benefits, but I just can't afford it on my own. With a small contribution from the employee and employer, it helps us to both have "skin in the game" and makes the wage replacement enough that my employees can actually take the time they need.

Furthermore, as a small business owner, I need my employees to be focused on work, when they are at the café, not worried about their family member who may have a health crisis or some other catastrophic event happening. These things will happen in life and I appreciate the fact that HB 3031 also covers medical crises, not just maternity or paternity leave.

I respectfully urge you to support HB 3031.

Sincerely,

Peter Emerson
Co-owner, Bipartisan Café