

March 25, 2019

To: The House Business and Labor Committee and the Senate Workforce Committee  
From: Rachel Jesequel  
Re: Support of HB 3031

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Rachel Jesequel and I live in Beaverton. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of HB 3031 again, although I do find it frustrating to have to be here in Salem to offer this testimony for the 2nd time. I have been telling our story in support of paid family leave for years now, and I'd like this to be the last time I need to make this plea. Our story is not extreme, but it is extremely common.

My husband Kevin and I have a blended family. The birth of our daughter four years ago was very difficult and left me incapacitated for about a week with great difficulty walking.

Kevin was only able to take two days off to be with me in the hospital. If he had not returned to work after those two days, he would have been replaced. We were living paycheck to paycheck, and our family could not afford for him to take unpaid leave and certainly could not afford for him to lose his job. Our medical bills for the birth were high and we were truly scared about losing everything. As a result our family had a very rough start with our new baby. Our family was stressed because Kevin did not have the much needed time to bond with our baby nor was he able to support me in caring for her. I had a really difficult recovery from the birth, and it was very hard to take care of the baby myself. In addition to my physical pain, it was painful for me to witness Kevin not having the much needed bonding time with our daughter. I could see the way it hurt him to miss so much time with her.

My husband works very hard outside our home and he loves his family. Kevin and I believe that it is very important for men to have paid family leave because it would change the whole dynamic of families. It would build a family bond from the beginning, and it would help to level the playing field in the workplace because both men and women would be expected to take time off for a baby. It would also change children's lives, because fathers could be more involved. Many men like Kevin want to take time off work when their children are born but can't because of finances and fear of losing their jobs. It's far past time for our culture to give men the freedom they deserve to be available for their families. Oregon can lead the way with an equitable policy that works fairly for everyone.

I am asking you on behalf of our entire family -- and all Oregon families -- to please support HB3031.

Sincerely,

Rachel Jesequel