

March 22, 17

Chair Lively and Members of the House Early Education and Family Support Committee,

My name is Chelsea Whitney, and I reside in Eugene, Oregon. I am writing to you to express support for paid family and medical leave for Oregon. I am the proud mother of a delightful four year old. When I was pregnant with my child in 2012 I was attending graduate school full time and working part time as a home health nurse. I was not eligible for any paid time off after the birth of my child. I was fortunate in that my graduate school studies allowed me enough financial aid to focus on finishing my degree while caring for my child. However, many other parents in Oregon are not so fortunate and must leave their days or week old babies to return to work to have the necessary funds to pay their rent or mortgage and feed their families.

Recently, I suffered a major injury requiring time off work and potentially surgery. I am feeling incredibly grateful that I am employed in a position where I receive paid time off while I recuperate and regain my health. Without this paid time my family would risk financial ruin or I would have to risk my health returning to work before my doctor believes I should.

Sadly, far too many Oregon families do not have this option. If they have a medical event for themselves or a loved one or they welcome the joyous birth of a child they are faced with potential economic insecurity or leaving a family member needing care. This is an agonizing decision and one Oregon families should not have to face. I fully support Paid Family and Medical Leave for Oregon.

Thank You,

Chelsea Whitney