

March 25, 2019

To: The House Business and Labor Committee and the Senate Workforce Committee

From: Beverly Anne Ward

Re: Support of HB 3031

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Beverly Anne Ward and I'm here tonight with Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon and I live in Grants Pass.

When I was 34 years old, I had my first child and took off eight weeks of work with no pay. Due to my pregnancy, I had painful back issues which caused me to take off extra time for myself before the birth of my child. My husband got laid off from his job because he wanted to spend time with our new born, and we ended up having to empty out our 401k retirement savings from previous jobs, as well as using up all of my paid sick leave and vacation time. Although my husband got laid off from his job, my job paid too much money to be able to qualify for any benefits or assistance, so my income was our only income for a while. Once my husband got a new job and I had to return back to work, finding a day care option was not only expensive, but nearly impossible to find a day care that would accept newborns. We relied on our family and friends for babysitting and they would often switch throughout the day and would watch our child during their free hours. We don't know what we would have done without them, and cannot imagine what other people who do not have any type of family support do.

My child was only six weeks old by the time I had to leave them and go back to work, which took a major toll on my emotional health, as I did not feel like I could spend the time I wanted to with my baby. The environment and workplace that I was in did not allow me to nurse or pump, and I did not get breaks in the day to do so either. Working with a public health department at the time, there were many children around us, and it hurt me to hear or see babies near me, when I knew I was unable to be with my own.

My employer made me fill out FMLA paperwork every time I needed to take a sick day to take care of my child, and I felt that she was holding it against me if the time had totaled out to be more than six weeks in a given year. At only 34 years old, my husband and I had to start our retirement plans over and empty our 401k's just to spend time with our newborn baby for the first six weeks of her life. It hurt me as a mother to not be able to spend time with my child and see her grow during the beginning of her life, and this had a major effect on my experience as a mother.