

March 14, 2019

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for having this hearing on HB 3031, the FAMLI Equity Act. I live in Portland and am the Executive Director of an organization that runs a high school Early College Program. I'm also a board member of Family Forward Oregon.

I support this act because we can't have a healthy society when people's ability to care for their families depends on luck.

Two months ago I was diagnosed with breast cancer. Six weeks ago I had a bilateral mastectomy and an ancillary lymph node dissection. In other words, a surgeon removed both of my breasts and a large chunk of my armpit. In practical terms, this meant that for a few weeks, it's been difficult to put a dish away, drive to the grocery store, or hug my young sons. On March 18th, a week before you read this, I will have begun chemo and likely have a new haircut.

Now, I consider myself an extremely lucky person. But Jenn, why would you say that, you're 41 years old and you have cancer? Because the week I was diagnosed, my husband had accepted a new job. He started the week before I had surgery. And here's where the luck comes in. He has a job where he can work remotely and he has a boss and colleagues, who upon hearing about my surgery, said "take all the time you need." Pretty lucky, right?

So what I'm proposing, is that we install a large roulette wheel, with the numbers, and the black and red spaces and the little ball that goes round and round, in the middle of the capital building. And when any of us is an accident, or has a baby, or our parent has a stroke, we come down to Salem and spin the wheel. Maybe if the ball lands on evens, you get three weeks of leave, odds, none. We can work out the details later.

Or we can accept that our current system is even worse than a casino because I'm not just lucky, I'm privileged. I can afford to take time off, so can my husband and so can our friends and family who have been essential in helping us the past few months.

So for all those women fighting off nausea, adjusting their scarves and wigs, doing their jobs and taking care of their families, I'm writing to request that you please vote to pass the FAMLI Equity Act. Thank you.

Jennifer Schuberth

Portland, OR