

March 25, 2019

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

From: Kristin Applegate-King

Re: Support of HB 3031

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kristin Applegate-King and I live in Portland, OR.

I am an Oncology Nurse, turned Hospice Nurse in Portland, Oregon. I was the sole family member/Caregiver/Care-Coordinator for my elderly father's needs for the last 6 years of his life.

For years, I had to coordinate my full-time Oncology job with my father's needs. He had dementia and skin cancer. I took him to all his medical and dental appointments, handled his finances, and ensured his safety as his needs changed over the years. He lived in my home for a period of time, and in a variety of Assisted Living and Adult Foster Home environments after it became unsafe for him to live in his own home.

(*I work full time as a nurse to provide Health Insurance Benefits for myself, my husband, and our teenage son.)

It became necessary to leave my full-time Oncology job to keep up my father's needs. I ended up taking a 0.8 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) position, which involved leaving a Hospital system I had been with for a decade, to join a new HealthCare company.

I started with Hospice in February of 2018. My father experienced an unexpected and rapid decline in late April 2018. He was hospitalized, then admitted to Home Health Hospice, and died on May 1st, 2018.

He died in my dining room. I had to take Time Off Without Pay for this to happen.

I was less than 3 months into my Hospice job, was not yet entitled to any benefits. I could not access FMLA, nor OFLA, and did not yet have any Sick Time, or Paid Time Off accrued.

I had to keep working during the last days of my father's life. This was especially traumatizing for him, as due to his advanced Dementia, I was the only person that he connected with or trusted, and his time in the Hospital was disorienting and terrifying for him.

He died under the care of the very Hospice organization I had just started working for. There was no time for me to appropriately tend to the details of End of Life Care, or Active Death & Dying, much less my own Mental Health or Grief processing.

Had I insisted on taking the leave I really needed, I would have lost my new job, and with that, the benefits for myself and my 2 surviving family members.

One of the most important features I seek in a new Paid Family Medical Leave Bill, would be **Portability**. Things would have gone much differently for me and my dying parent, had I not so recently switched jobs.

Sincerely,
Kristin Applegate-King