

March 25, 2019

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jan Montes and I live in NE Salem.

Having my mother live with our family has had its ups and downs. I was an unpaid caregiver for the first 5 years of my mother living with our family. I had to work a part time job that didn't require a ton of commitment in order to be more accessible to care for my mom which caused a decrease in financial gain and much stress. At the same time my mother came to live with our family there were 6 sons who were in the process of leaving the nest and transitioning into adulthood. Also, at the same time I was going through a divorce and had lost the income of my husband. My mother at one point shared the bedroom with my son who was a teenager at the time. My mother has incontinence. She has Alzheimers and so she asks questions over and over, and is confused continually. She needs help eating, remembering, walking, bathing, getting dressed.

I am the sole caregiver for my mother. I am now a paid Home Health Caregiver for my mother through NWSDS. The date of my mother's death is an unknown and an impending variable in our family's lives. I think about this every single day of my life. Even though, I am fortunate, in my opinion, to be paid to care for my aging mother and fortunate to be able to bring her with me to some of the volunteer activities in which I work not a day goes by that I don't think about what I will do upon her passing. Not only am I concerned with the mourning period but I am also constantly concerned with the facts that my current age is 58 and I suffer from clinical depression, anxiety, PTSD and ADD. I manage my disabilities well enough but how will my mother's death impact our family during those crucial first weeks and months. Will I need a period of time to decompress, seek further counseling? Perhaps I will need special counseling to be able to deal with the grieving process at that point? There are so many unknowns. I value my mother and all that she has given to me which is why I have chosen to be with her as her caregiver. I also value my own mental and physical health, and that of my children. I worry about my three sons who are currently young men in college and I wonder how this all will affect them.

With the help of my sons who are also involved in the care of their grandma in order to support and honor her we have struggled to get by. Making ends meet has varying challenges each month, having to make difficult choices on what we need and want versus what we can afford. Not all families are as fortunate as ours, some can't find a way to survive and take care of their loved ones and this is unacceptable. Please support families like mine by passing HB3031 and help bring more stable fortune to those of us who so desperately need it and struggle to get by.

Sincerely, Jan Montes