

March 25, 2019

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you my testimony for the need for paid family leave.

My name is Amy Powers. My family and I live in Portland. My husband and I both work away from home. I gave birth to my beautiful daughter and soon after found out she needed extra stay in the NICU. My husband and I were extremely stressed and heartbroken to be discharged from the hospital without Aubrey.

At the time, I was employed at a Portland nonprofit. I worked with at-risk students and led a team of youth workers. I had no family leave, no benefits, and no financial support from my employer. My husband and I could not afford to be at home to take care of my daughter. I returned to work after a very short 4 weeks of unpaid time off. To this day, my biggest regret is that, because of her time in the NICU and my short leave, I did not spend enough time bonding with my newborn daughter.

It was a time of straining financial hardship but, even worse, was the strain on our tender bonding time with our daughter. We deeply relied on help from family. I don't know what I would have done without my family's help. I worked part-time because it did not make sense to work full time to break even and pay for childcare full time. Oregon has one of the highest costs of childcare in the country and we felt that immensely.

It would have made a huge difference if we had paid family leave. I would have had time to nurture my newborn, take her to her numerous doctor and labs follow up appointments without worrying. And I would have returned to work with a different mindset and ready to work. I ask you all on behalf of my family and all the families that endure these types of challenges to please support House Bill 3031. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Amy Powers