

On behalf of the Oregon State Firefighters Council, I am here to express our full support for HB 3031, paid family and medical leave insurance.

We see firsthand how emergencies place families in great stress, physically, emotionally and financially. We see people who rush home from work because a family member has been in some sort of medical emergency, only to return to work once their beloved family member is rushed to the hospital because they can't afford the time off. We see when financial limitations prevent someone from being with a loved one in a time of need and during a medical emergency. We see children left in the hospital alone because their parents can't afford the time off to be with them. These families need paid family and medical leave insurance.

Occupational illness is a serious challenge in today's Oregon Fire Service, cancer PTSD, ten fold reported suicide numbers versus the public, means paid family and medical leave is essential to our livelihood from both a financial and emotional perspective. Being able to respond to our families needs just like we respond to the needs of each caller to our 911 centers is only fair. Family and medical leave does just that. The ability to take paid leave to tend to our families needs is the answer.

No one wants to be alone when facing a serious illness and we will all need care from a family member at some point in our lives. Nobody should have to sacrifice their own or their families economic security when dealing with serious health conditions. Please support HB 3031 and pass a paid family and medical leave insurance program that will benefit families across Oregon.

Karl Koenig

President

Oregon State Fire Fighters Council