



Chair Barker and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Urban League of Portland in support of HB 3031, the FAMILI Equity Act. The Urban League of Portland is a nonprofit civil rights, direct service, and advocacy organization that serves all of Oregon and SW Washington. Our mission is to empower African American and other Oregonians to achieve equality in education, employment, and economic security.

The best way to strengthen the long term health and economic security of Black women, children and families is to start early. We now know that the most critical developmental period is pre-conception up to about age 2—the first 1,000 days of a child’s life. (State of Black Oregon, 2015). Black mothers are much less likely to have access to paid time off and are more likely to have health complications during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum than white mothers due to cultural and institutional racism that impacts our access to quality employment, healthcare, and healthy environments. The FAMILI Equity Act and other solutions that reduce economic and financial stress on mothers can significantly improve the health of Black mothers and that of their children.

The benefits go beyond early life and impact the entire family. Oregon’s history of forced displacement and migration of the Black community has meant lost wealth opportunities and a widening racial wealth gap. When Black employees are unexpected ill or injured, lost income can lead to housing instability and other compounding crises. These impacts accumulate over time, creating smaller safety nets or retirement savings that can be used to shield families from financial vulnerability.

The FAMILI Act will provide critical support to Black seniors and the familial care they rely on. It is critical that the bill continue to include the expanded definition of family member to make sure all families, especially Asian, Latinx, and Black multigenerational families that live under one roof (Pew Research Center), are able to care for each other without putting their economic security at risk.

Black-owned businesses will also benefit from this bill because it will level the playing field for the small and mid-sized businesses that cannot offer paid leave, and that therefore are at a competitive disadvantage with larger, more established businesses.

All families are important and no worker should be forced to choose between caring for themselves or a family member and their income. The Urban League of Portland strongly urges a YES vote on HB 3031 to address racial gaps in health and economic security in Oregon.

Sincerely,
Hannah Holloway
Policy Specialist | Urban League of Portland