



HB 3031
March 25, 2019
Testimony in Support

Chair Barker, Vice Chairs Barreto and Bynum, members of the committee. I am Nancy MacMorris-Adix, chair of the OR affiliate of the American College of Nurse-Midwives Legislative Committee and chair of the Oregon Nurses Association Cabinet on Health Policy. I am a Certified Nurse Midwife with over 30 years of experience working with pregnant women and their newborns in the mid-Willamette Valley.

The issue of paid family and medical leave is one that midwives deal with on a regular basis. It is all too common for me to be asked to sign a note for a new mother to return to work at 2-6 weeks after the birth of her baby. When I discuss that this is not recommended, I am confronted with concerns about paying the rent or providing food for the family.

No new mother should be forced to make these choices. Research tells us that both newborns and their mothers need time to bond, to establish healthy breastfeeding, and to recover from childbirth. Breastmilk production is dependent on a healthy stimulation of the breasts by a hungry baby. Though breast pumps are helpful as the child grows, they are not nearly as effective at establishing a healthy milk supply as a nursing infant. Women at greatest risk of postpartum depression need to be relieved of the financial stresses that force them to return to work immediately. Fathers who take family leave following the birth of a child are more likely to spend increased time with their children in the following months.

In addition, HB 3031 broadens the definition of family. When I was a young nurse, I lost my younger brother and needed to return to the Midwest for his funeral. My employer did not consider my brother as immediate family. At age 26, he was much closer to me than my new husband's parents, who were considered immediate family. As people, we should have the flexibility to define what is family to us in these stressful times. The changes to the definition of family in HB 3031 move in this direction.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am asking you to support new mothers by passing the paid family and medical leave Insurance act.