

Chair Taylor, Chair Barker, and Members of the Committees, thank you for the opportunity to speak here this evening. My name is Thuy Tran. I live in Portland, I am a mother of three, a small business owner, and a board member of the Main Street Alliance of Oregon. I am here today to remind you that our state urgently needs paid family and medical leave.

One week after I gave birth to my child, I was back at work. I had recently completed optometry school and just opened the doors of my small business, Rose City Vision Care. I invested everything I had in starting my business, and my growing family needed my income to survive. I nursed my one-week-old baby in between appointments, and my mom came to work with me to care for him while I was seeing patients. I know how lucky I am to have had her there during this critical time for my career and family. My mom is getting older now, and if she gets sick, I would not be able to drop everything and care for her the way she did for me.

I know of very few families who could go without a paycheck -- especially during a major life event. And now, eight families rely on paychecks from my practice to meet their needs. As a small business owner, I want my employees to have access to paid family and medical leave, but I can not afford to offer it on my own.

A paid family and medical leave insurance program would alleviate a major stressor for small business owners like me, and for all working Oregonians. It would create a safety net, making it possible for new parents to take the time they and their children deserve in those first precious weeks and giving the rest of us peace of mind that should anything serious happen to a loved one or ourselves we could take the necessary time away from work to care or heal. It would allow small businesses like mine to support and retain our employees over time.

States across the country are realizing the value of programs like this. California has had a statewide paid family leave program since 2004, and [87 percent of employers](#) report that offering paid leave has had positive or neutral effects on turnover, productivity, and profitability, as well as employee performance and morale. With the recent enactment of Washington's paid leave program, the absence of one in our state becomes even more difficult to understand.

Big business lobbyists will tell you that paid family and medical leave will hurt small businesses. The truth is, actual small business owners like myself support this policy. An investment in paid family and medical leave is an investment in the health of Oregon families and small businesses. We have waited long enough. It is time for you, our elected officials, to do what is right for Oregonians. It is time to pass the FAMILY Equity Act.