



OREGON WORKING FAMILIES PARTY

VOTE YOUR VALUES

March 25, 2019

To: The House Business and Labor Committee
From: Sydney Scout, State Director, Oregon Working Families Party
Re: Support of HB 3031

Dear Chair Barker and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Oregon Working Families Party in support of HB 3031, the FAMILI Equity Act. The Oregon Working Families Party is a political party that fights for an economy that works for all of us, and a democracy in which every voice matters.

Currently, paid family and medical leave is only accessible to an elite few. The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was a historic accomplishment when it passed 26 years ago, but inequities in eligibility and access have grown considerably over time. Four out of 10 workers, most of which are black, brown, and queer, are not eligible for FMLA job protection. Just 17% of workers – including just 6% of low-wage workers – have access to paid leave through their employer. For those that are, most cannot afford to take the time they need. In fact, 37% of those who do take unpaid leave end up in debt, and many more simply can't take the leave at all, or take far too little leave to fully heal.

Expanding the law in Oregon by supporting the FAMILI Equity Act would be an important step in decreasing economic disparities along racial, gender, sexuality, and class lines. It's time to pass a real Paid Family & Medical Leave program that leaves no worker behind.

Not only is paid leave critical to economic and racial justice, but it benefits Oregon's economy and businesses. Without paid leave, workers fall behind on bills and medical expenses, and are more likely to file for bankruptcy, which negatively impacts the overall economy. Paid leave improves worker retention and saves employers' expensive turnover costs. After more than 10 years of paid leave in California, employers overwhelmingly report positive or neutral impact on their business.

Nearly every Oregonian will need to take an extended leave from work at some point in their life. No worker should face financial ruin when they need to take time off from work to care for an ill loved one, welcome a new baby, or recover from an illness. We urge you to support HB 3031 and pass a statewide Paid Family and Medical Leave program this year.

Sincerely,
Sydney Scout
State Director, Oregon Working Families Party