



AFSCME Member Testimony in Support of HB 3031

Chairs Barker and Taylor and members of the House Business and Labor and Senate Workforce Committees,

My name is Rebecca Knight, I am a member of AFSCME Local 173 and I live in Polk County where I work in public health. I appreciate this opportunity to share my story about why HB 3031 is so important for all employees in Oregon.

Last May, I had my baby. I had not been with my current employer long enough to have saved up time to have a full three months of paid leave, the amount of time that American Academy of Pediatrics recommends as the shortest amount of time a parent should be home with a newborn. I was committed to giving it a try to be at home with my little one to bond and be able to rest and recover. However, taking unpaid leave proved to be more costly and complicated than I had originally planned.

I am also the legal guardian for my niece. This responsibility comes with the requirement of having health insurance for her. I cannot let that lapse and when I was on unpaid leave, this became a real risk because I had to cover the full cost of my insurance, \$1900 a month for my family including my niece. After two months of unpaid leave, I had to return to work or lose my insurance.

Families should not be put into the position of having to cut short their family or medical leave because they may lose their health insurance. HB 3031 will give all employees in Oregon the ability to have paid time off to ensure critical bonding time with a new child, the time they need to heal from their own illness, or support a loved one in their recovery while not having to worry about the loss of insurance or how they will have to pay other bills.