

## **TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS AND LABOR**

**By Maria Delgado**

Chair Baker, Taylor and members of the committee,

My name is Maria Delgado. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 3031 that would create a paid family medical leave program in Oregon.

I am originally from Mexico City, and I immigrated to the United States, in search of the American Dream in 1991. In 1998, I gave birth to my first son in California. While my employer at the time, allowed for one month of leave, I was forced to permanently leave work because a month was not enough to care for my new born baby, who developed serious health conditions.

In 2006, I moved to Oregon. As a single mother of two, and without knowledge about resources or connections to community or family, I worked hard to find a job. Through the years, I found work in various canneries in Oregon. Many of these canneries did not allow workers to take enough time away from work while sick. On many occasions, I had to work with severe flu symptoms.

In 2009, I was diagnosed with skin cancer. I had to undergo treatment and a major surgery that kept me away from work. I was forced to leave my job, I was told that after missing a few days, the employer would have to hire someone to replace me. I did not know this large company of more than 200 workers, they had to provide 12 unpaid weeks of Paid Family Medical Leave. I did not know my worker rights, and like many other people I lived in constant fear.

Given my family's situation, my son began to suffer from emotional health issues. As a single parent, recovering from a severe health condition, I found it difficult to find employment. I had to live on government assistance, with about 500 dollars a month to survive. I never could focus on achieving stability with my family due to the instability of my work place. It hurts me to know that I had rights that I did not know of, which could have lessened the impact on my kids during these difficult times.

That is why today I fully support HB 3031, which would establish a paid family medical leave program so that our workers can take care of their families, especially our most vulnerable workers.

Today, as a mother, a worker, and a member of our community, I ask for your support for HB 3031.

Sincerely,

Maria Delgado