



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 99-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

June 10, 2019

To: House Rules Committee
Representative Paul Holvey, Chair

Re: **HB 2005** – Creates family and medical leave insurance program to provide covered employee with portion of wages while on family medical leave – **Support**

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our support for HB 2005, which establishes a paid family and medical leave insurance program.

The League of Women Voters has supported the concept of Paid Family Leave for over a decade – for the wellbeing of children, to support working families and to promote equity in the workplace. The ability of employees and employers to respond to the health care needs of employees’ families is an essential piece to the economic well-being of Oregon’s workforce. Currently, employees are eligible to take UNPAID leave, but the reality is that many families cannot afford the loss of income; they must choose between caring for the sick and paying the rent.

The League of Women Voters advocates only for legislation that adheres to consensus positions developed by the membership through study and discussion. We support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families. We support policies, programs, and funding at all levels of the community and government that promote the well-being, encourage the full development, and ensure the safety of all children. Clearly, a paid family and medical leave insurance program falls within those parameters.

HB 2005 creates a self-funding insurance program requiring small monthly payroll contributions to be paid by employers and employees. The program would be run similarly to unemployment insurance and increases the coverage for workers from the current unpaid leave law.

We wish to emphasize three main points:

- The lack of a paid leave program disproportionately affects women and people of color, who provide much of the caregiving services. It is a question of equity.
- The benefit level for our lowest-wage workers must be great enough for them to actually utilize the leave. These workers are likely living paycheck to paycheck, without savings to carry them through loss of income.
- By having a program run like unemployment insurance, individual employers are relieved of many of the administrative burdens commonly associated with a paid leave benefit. It becomes easier for both employers to manage and individual workers to access.

HB 2005 is a compromise bill between family advocates and business interests. The new provisions recognize the impacts a paid family leave policy might have on small businesses and has provisions to mitigate any adverse effects.

This is a win/win compromise. We urge your support for HB 2005.

Sincerely,

Norman Turrill
LWVOR President

Debbie Runciman
LWVOR Women’s Issues Coordinator