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PORTLAND, OR 97239

July 11, 2019

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a letter of support for HB 2005-3, Paid Family and Medical Leave Program to support working people, families and businesses.

The Oregon Latino Health Coalition is a statewide health advocacy organization dedicated to eliminating health disparities impacting one of the fastest growing, young and diverse population--Latinx Oregonians. At the Oregon Latino Health Coalition, we envision an Oregon where all have equitable opportunities and resources, leading to optimal health and fulfilling lives.

Oregon's strength lies in our communities and the success of our children. Paid family leave allows parents to take the time to care and bond with their children--giving them a healthy start in life. Research overwhelmingly demonstrates, each week up to 12 weeks of paid leave improves outcomes for entire families, including parents and in return our communities. It lowers infant mortality, increases breastfeeding rate and duration, just to name a few. Paid Family and Medical Leave is an investment in Oregon's future.

Yet, only 15% of people have access to paid family leave at work. Paid Family and Medical Leave act is good for Oregonians, but it impacts communities of color in different ways. Of the 15% of people with access, 49.7% are white and only 25.1% are Latinx. Meaning our families are left with the difficult choice of losing their ability to pay bills and caring for their loved ones at a disproportionate rate. In most families, it's women who do most of the caregiving, whether it's for children, other adults, or both. Families like Carmen, with three school-aged children who can't afford to lose her paycheck returned to work just two weeks after giving birth. Breaking bond and breastfeeding at the most critical times in life is heartbreaking and can have long term impacts. Paid Family and Medical Leave will make it easier for women to stay in the workforce and continue bringing home the paychecks their families rely on.

HB 2005-3, supports a meaningful duration of leave at 12 weeks. It's inclusive of all working people, no matter the nature of their job and has an inclusive definition of "family". As a statewide organization representing Latinx Oregonians, we believe that health equity can be accomplished when all Oregonians are able to receive Paid Family and Medical Leave to improve health outcomes. Paid Family and Medical Leave Act allows parents time to care for their children, giving them the best chance at a healthy start in life. It's time for Oregon to have Paid Family and Medical Leave. Because we all deserve the time to care. This is why we urge you to invest in the well-being of our communities and support HB 2005-3.

Respectfully,

Olivia Quiroz, Executive Director  
Oregon Latino Health Coalition