

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dacia Grayber, and I live in SW Portland. I am here in support of House Bill 3031.

I have spent several days in Salem this session lobbying for this bill. I believe that paid family leave helps create the necessary foundation of strong and secure families, and from that, we build vibrant, thriving communities. I never in a million years imagined how personal this bill would become.

On Thursday of this past week, my family's world was turned upside down. My handsome, healthy husband went to a follow-up appointment for a seemingly innocuous lump on his neck, and by that evening, we had a preliminary diagnosis of throat cancer with spread to the lymph nodes.

My husband and I have been professional firefighters for nearly 25 and 15 years, respectively. We have 4 children. I assumed that our terms of employment covered paid family leave; after all, we give our everything in the line of service. To my shock and dismay, we have discovered there is none. Zero. I will have to use my own meager accumulated sick leave to care for my husband as we enter this battle.

I know fear, and I know courage. Years racing into burning buildings, crawling into mangled cars, and calming my own racing pulse while I re-started the stopped hearts of others... I have felt nervous, and honestly at times afraid, but I have never felt a fear like this.

I fear what our months to come will look like. How will I pay the mortgage, maintain some semblance of normal for our kids, and take care of my warrior of a husband? How do I choose between keeping a paycheck coming in, or caring for my family in our darkest hour of need?

The time is past due to bring paid family leave to our communities. This bill will be too late to help my family, but I ask of you all to find the hero in each one of you. I ask that you come together so that no more Oregonians will have to choose between a paycheck or caring for a loved one fighting a life-changing illness.

Thank you so much for your time.

Respectfully,

Dacia Grayber

SW Portland