



Oregon moms and caregivers fighting for gender, economic, and racial justice.

To: House Committee on Labor & Workplace Standards

From: Family Forward Oregon

Date: March 24, 2025

RE: In Support of House Bill 3491

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Munoz and members of the committee,

On behalf of Family Forward, a statewide advocacy organization working to pass policies that support care and caregivers, thank you for the opportunity to express our strong support for House Bill 3491 that will help address some outstanding issues with the program.

Paid Leave Oregon has been a resounding success since its launch in September 2023. To date, the program has provided over 125,000 Oregonians with more than \$1 billion in benefits, allowing them to take the time they need to care for themselves or a loved one, or access safe leave. This is a testament to the critical importance of paid leave in supporting the well-being and economic security of workers and their families. By providing a safety net for workers during times of need, Paid Leave Oregon has helped to reduce stress, improve health outcomes, and promote economic stability. And while the program has faced some challenges as this massive, brand new program has rolled out, we are proud to see this program thriving and making a real difference in the lives of Oregonians.

While the program has been a significant step forward in providing paid family and medical leave, there are still some outstanding issues that need to be addressed. HB 3491 aims to address some of these issues. First, it requires employers to provide an overview of leave benefits to workers when they inquire about leave or discuss a reason for leave. This is crucial in ensuring that workers understand their rights under the new frameworks of OFLA and PFML as a result of the passage of SB 1515 in 2024.

Secondly, the bill addresses the issue of being unable to take leave in increments shorter than one day. Under Paid Leave Oregon, the system can currently only pay out benefits in increments of a day or more. People need the ability to utilize Paid Leave Oregon in increments of less than one day, like they already do under OFLA. This means that workers are able to take a family member to a medical appointment and not be at risk of being fired for doing so since it is job protected time.

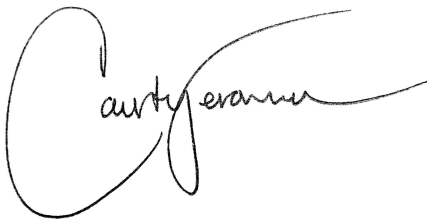
As OFLA protections for bonding and medical purposes disappeared with the passage of SB 1515, this will force workers to have to choose between not taking this time to care for themselves or a loved one at all, or incentivize them taking a whole day of paid leave, when

they would otherwise have been able to go back to work. This disproportionately and adversely impacts hourly workers and caregivers primarily. HB 3491 requires the Employment Department to study and make recommendations for paying increments of less than 1 day under Paid Leave Oregon, as well as report on the impact of the lack of job protection.

These changes are reasonable alterations in the aftermath of SB 1515 to protect workers and ensure they understand their rights. HB 3491 makes these first steps to ensure that our paid family medical leave works as intended: to help both workers and employers have healthy employees to return to work.

We urge you to support HB 3491 and thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Courtney Veronneau". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping tail.

Courtney Veronneau
Deputy Director
Family Forward Oregon

