

March 8, 2016

Dear members of the labor committee,

My name is Joanne Grailich, and I am a part-time computer consultant, and full-time stay at home mother. I used to work outside the home but with a handicapped daughter and a three year old foster child (hopefully soon to be adopted) that became impossible.

Paid family leave would make a huge difference to my family. In my family's case, it is especially important because our daughter has arthrogryposis and is confined to a wheelchair. My husband occasionally needs to take off time from work if we have a dentist's appointment, doctor's appointment or even a hair appointment since he needs to lift her from her chair into another chair, which I am not able to do alone. If my husband or I gets sick, or one of us is away on business, the other parent needs to be available to step in without losing pay. Being able to take time off to care for our daughter without losing pay would be a huge help.

Fortunately, my husband found an employer that is flexible with his hours enabling him to help out when he is needed, as long as he gives them notice. But this hasn't always been the case. When he was working at other companies, it was a struggle. Given that he is also a computer consultant, he is often required to be on-call. As a result, I was often left alone to take care of my daughter because he had to work late or travel, which created a very stressful situation. It is difficult for parents as it is to raise children, but without the other parent being able to support the main caretaker for fear of losing pay is an unfair burden on families. I know people are afraid to take off time from work for fear of losing their jobs as well as pay. This creates a difficult situation for both stay at home caretakers as well as parents working outside the home.

My family, and countless others like mine, need paid family and medical leave. Pass SB 221 now!

Joanne Grailich