

February 6, 2007

HB 1658 Family and Medical Leave Insurance
Commerce and Labor Committee Hearing Testimony

L.W.

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you my experiences with the California Paid Family Leave program.

In January 2006 I lived and worked in California. Until then, my husband was able to take care of himself. One night he suddenly became disoriented and hallucinated. After that night, he could not be left alone for fear that he would harm himself. I had no idea what to do. I couldn't leave him alone nor was I financially able to leave my job. I was faced with asking my friends to stay with him until I could train someone at work to replace me. During this time my friend asked me if I had heard of the Paid Family Leave program. I had heard of the plan, but it was not posted on the bulletin board at my company so I was not sure what to do. I went online to get more information and downloaded the application.

I was employed full-time at a small business with less than 10 employees. I consulted our primary doctor to whether I would qualify for the insurance. After the doctor filled out the application, I had a meeting with the Human Resource person at work and submitted my application. Being a small company they weren't aware of how the plan worked. I was able to give them the information and together we submitted the application.

Having this paid family insurance allowed me to stay home with my husband without the stress that I would loose my job. Also, it gave me some financial support until I was able to get our lives together.

Being able to take care of my husband in our home helped him to begin to slowly stabilize. Because I could keep him home, we did not run up huge medical bills in the process.

I never even missed the premium deducted from my paycheck.

I worked for a small business and I had a demanding position, but I was able to train someone to take over my position fairly quickly. With this plan you can work with your employer and tailor it to meet your needs.