



Written testimony from Mowa Haile, founder, president and CEO of Sky-Blue Builders.

Dear committee members,

Thank you for your consideration of this written testimony. I write today in opposition to Senate Bill 188, the FAMILI bill. As the founder, president and CEO of a local small business I oppose the one-size-fits-all approach of this bill and the lack of exemption for companies like mine that are already providing paid leave benefits for employees today. While I support, and provide to my employees today, paid leave, I oppose components of this bill.

Sky Blue Builders is a small business of just over 50 employees, so each employee absence impacts us in a unique way. That said, we've historically provided both sick and vacation time as well as additional time off as approved and the flexibility of working from home when needed for personal or family reasons. We do this because we value our teammates and know they are key to our success. That said, we're also now at a place financially where we can work with our employees on leave packages.

Administering both our current leave, which does take into account our productivity needs and the unique circumstances of each staff member, while also navigating a new government-run program creates an administrative burden for our small company and for our employees. With a payroll tax like this, we would be forced to consider dropping some of our current leave benefits, cutting back on salaries or bonuses or even reducing hiring to manage the cost and administrative burden of this program.

We'd feel more comfortable if eligibility at least aligned with FMLA. To require us to provide up to 16 weeks of leave after only 17 weeks of full-time is shocking to us, as is the ease with which someone can qualify for this leave. We are concerned about the provision allowing an employee to take leave to care for "any other individual with whom the covered individual has a significant personal bond that is like a family relationship, regardless of biological or legal relationship." How does the state verify those relationships?



We are also concerned that we're footing the bill for government employees. Our payroll taxes, and those paid by any employers and employees that work for companies with more than 10 employees, are expected to subsidize this program for government workers, who will contribute significantly less than we will.

As a small, local company, we need flexibility and the ability to opt-out of the state program when we provide generous benefits already. Business, especially small and startup businesses, need to be agile and need flexibility during the early stages. These types of mandates, with no flexibility, will deter and put many businesses like ours at risk of surviving. Small business is already difficult enough... and we today do our best to care for employees, whether we have 10, 50 or 100. We should be encouraging entrepreneurship in Colorado, not stifling it through costly mandates.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mowa Haile