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SB260: Labor and Employment – Leave with Pay -- Bereavement Leave

Finance Committee SUPPORT FOR SB260

Madame Chair, Vice Chair and members of the Finance Committee:

Currently, bereavement in the work place is from an unemotional stand point. The days are given to get their affairs in order. But bereavement should include time for grief, and pets should be included.

The bond between a human and animal is a special one, as it is real unconditional love. Some people cannot have kids due to health or other extenuating circumstances and so pets are our children. We love and care for them just as a parent would a child. To lose a child is devastating – exactly the same as a pet.

There have been studies done (<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-we-need-to-take-pet-loss-seriously/>) “The *New England Journal of Medicine* reported in October 2017 that after her dog died, a woman experienced “broken heart syndrome”—a condition in which the response to grief is so severe the person exhibits symptoms that mimic a heart attack, including elevated hormone levels that can be 30 times greater than normal. “

I can tell you from my own experience on February 22 2019 my beloved corgi (dog) Ossie had to be put down. And here we are a year later and I still cry to think of him or speak his name. I attend a pet loss grief support group the third Thursday of every month. I was only given the day that he was put down and then had to be right back at work. I had no time to process. Ossie was my other half, my companion, my family. I rescued him as a baby from people that were abusing him and for the rest of my life he gave me unconditional love. Ossie and I had a special bond, one that I will never have with any other animal or human. I have anxiety and panic attacks. Somehow Ossie knew when they were coming and would jump in my lap and lick my tears or he would put his paw on my arm until I was calm. Side note – he was not a trained therapy dog; he did this because he loved me and wanted my pain, my anxiety to go away. He was letting me know that I was not alone and that he understood.

This is so hard for me to read this as a type. Pets are not just pets. They are living, breathing, thoughtful beings just like we are. They feel, they think, they love. As a pet owner I ask that you seriously pass this bill.

We deserve time to grieve for our family members. For some people their “pet” is the only family they have. Thank you for the opportunity to write this and thank you for your consideration. I ask for a

FAVORABLE REPORT on SB 260.

Sincerely,

NICOLE BOWERS

Nicole