

Representative Tim Walberg
Chair
House Education & Workforce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Bobby Scott
Ranking Member
House Education & Workforce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Ryan Mackenzie
Chair
Subcommittee on Workforce Protections
House Education & Workforce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Ilhan Omar
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Workforce Protections
House Education & Workforce
Committee U.S. House of Representatives
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of the Committee,

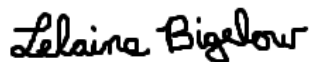
The Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality respectfully submits the attached factsheets for the record in connection with the Subcommittee on Workforce Protections hearing, “Examining Innovative Approaches to Paid Leave.”

The factsheets analyze H.R. 3089 and H.R. 3090—two bills that would incentivize states to enact paid leave programs and harmonize program standards to strengthen benefits and ease compliance.

Our analysis finds that by enacting H.R. 3089 and H.R. 3090, Congress could incentivize the creation of paid leave programs to the benefit of as many as 141 million workers who currently lack access to meaningful leave opportunities, including 40 million low-wage workers.

The Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality is a research center that generates policy solutions to improve the lives of people experiencing poverty in the United States. Collaborating with government and movement leaders, we provide timely, evidenced-based ideas to impact decision-making, increase economic well-being, and advance racial and gender equity. Please let us know if there’s any additional information that we could provide that would be helpful as part of your consideration of these important policies.

Sincerely,



Lelaine Bigelow

Executive Director

Georgetown Center on Poverty & Inequality

House Bipartisan Working Group on Paid Leave Legislation

Lelaine Bigelow & Shamaal Sheppard

Rep. Houlahan (D-PA) & Rep. Bice (R-OK) Lead Bills to Support Access to Paid Family Leave

Too many workers lack access to paid family and medical leave, forcing them to choose between a paycheck and caring for a new child, a seriously ill loved one, or their own health. This lack of access to paid family and medical leave destabilizes families and drives people out of the workforce. Low-wage workers are disproportionately [less likely to have access to paid leave](#). The two bipartisan measures introduced by Reps. Houlahan and Bice to improve access to paid family leave (PFL) and harmonize existing state PFL programs would strengthen families, communities, and the economy.

The More Paid Leave for More Americans Act ([HR 3089](#)), led by Representative Bice (R-OK), and the I-PLAN Act of 2025 ([HR 3090](#)), led by Representative Houlahan (D-PA), incentivize the creation of state paid leave programs. The bills would provide states with grants to support startup costs for developing state PFL programs and establish a network of new and existing state peers. This network would offer technical assistance and encourage the development of an interstate agreement to improve job quality and PFL across state lines. If passed, this legislation would create the first-ever intergovernmental network of state PFL administrators.

States Would Receive Federal Grants to Support New Paid Leave Programs

HR 3089 (Bice) would establish a competitive grant program for states with PFL policies covering the birth or adoption of a child. Details include:

- Grants range from \$1.5 million to \$7 million and can be used for a range of needs related to the start-up costs of state PFL programs.
- To be eligible for the grant program, states must include at least six weeks of paid parental leave, a covered partnership with a private entity,¹ and a sustainable financing mechanism that uses premiums to cover the cost of program administration.
- One year after receiving a grant, states must submit a report to the U.S. Secretary of Labor detailing the use of funds and the number of individuals in the state who have received PFL benefits due to their program implementation. The Secretary will submit annual reports updating appropriate Congressional committees on the progress of state paid leave programs. The legislation also requires an annual audit of states conducted by the Inspector General of the Department of Labor.

¹ A covered partnership is defined as a partnership between the state and a private entity that administers the PFL benefit (e.g. an insurance company); states may allow employers to self-administer PFL benefits in lieu of a partnership with a private entity.

A Network Would Support States & Businesses on Paid Leave

HR 3090 (Houlahan) would establish the Interstate Paid Leave Action Network, or I-PLAN. This network would provide peer support and develop an interstate agreement to streamline benefit delivery, reduce administrative burden, and harmonize state family leave programs.

The I-PLAN would regularly convene representatives of each state's PFL program to coordinate and harmonize state programs. States participating in the network would be required to meet at least three times a year, and are encouraged to create a single policy and administrative standard across their programs. The I-PLAN would allow states who enter an agreement to clearly define processes for workers who work or move across state lines to receive paid family leave. The network is tasked with developing and regularly refining interstate agreements, improving clarity and scope with each iteration.

Paid Leave Supports Families, Businesses, & States

Paid family leave can strengthen the economic security of families across income levels, improve labor participation, and boost state economies.

FAMILIES STAY HEALTHY & FINANCIALLY SECURE

Research shows that strong paid leave policies are good for families. For example:

- Paid parental leave is linked to better health outcomes for both parents and children, including [fewer postpartum illnesses and improved bonding, which leads to positive brain development](#) for newborns.
- Across income levels, women's participation in the workforce strengthens [family economic security](#), and women with access to paid leave after birth or adoption are [93 percent more likely to remain in the workforce](#) than those without.
- PFL adds [\\$28.5 billion](#) to family income annually.

BUSINESSES RETAIN WORKERS & REDUCE COSTS

Research shows that strong paid leave policies are good for employers. For example:

- State paid leave policies level the playing field for small businesses that often cannot [compete with large companies](#) that can afford to offer paid leave benefits.
- Access to paid leave improves [employee perception](#) of workplace culture, relationships within the workplace, and employee satisfaction.
- Businesses experience higher productivity, fewer unplanned absences, and lower rates of costly [employee turnover](#).

STATES RELIEVE BUDGETS & SAVE ON PUBLIC BENEFITS

Paid Family Leave can generate savings by [reducing state costs of other public benefits](#) programs.

Women who have access to paid leave are [nearly 40% less likely to seek assistance from SNAP or TANF](#) after having received paid family leave when compared to women who did not have access.

Federal-State Partnerships to Expand Paid Family & Medical Leave

Lelaine Bigelow & Shamaal Sheppard

At some point in our lives, nearly all of us will need to take time away from a job to address a loved one's or our own serious illness, or to welcome a new child into our family. Paid leave makes sense—for workers, families, and businesses. Paid leave policies allow all workers to provide necessary care for themselves and their families, support better health and child development outcomes for workers and children, and ensure the financial stability of workers, their families, and their employers.

Unequal Access to Paid Leave Results in Hardship for Low-Paid Workers

Millions of low-income workers in the United States face a tough choice when a family or medical emergency occurs: miss work and lose vital income, or go without caregiving support. Unlike workers with higher wages who are [more likely to have employer-provided paid leave](#), employees in low-paid jobs often lack access to paid time off. Too often, no paid family and medical leave [leads to job loss](#) for low-paid workers and intensifies financial struggles.

Workers without paid leave are more likely to experience [financial hardship](#), [high stress](#), [difficulties with mental health](#), and [poor physical health](#). Employers face [increased turnover and recruiting costs](#) as a result of people leaving the workforce. Offering paid family and medical leave is not just a benefit for workers: it's an investment in economic stability, [workforce retention](#), and [healthier communities](#).

Federal Support Can Help States Bridge the Gaps in Paid Leave Access

In the absence of a universal, national paid leave policy, state paid leave programs have emerged to bridge the gap for many low-income workers, who have the [least access to employer paid leave](#). Federal policymakers recognize the important role the federal government can play in helping states expand access to paid family leave and harmonize existing programs. Two pending proposals, the More Paid Leave for More Americans Act ([H.R. 3089](#)) and the I-PLAN Act of 2025 ([H.R. 3090](#)), would provide funding and technical assistance to states with paid family and medical leave programs, assisting them in designing and implementing benefits that serve workers in low-paid jobs. By providing grants, guidance, and opportunities for interstate collaboration, these bills would help states strengthen existing programs and create new ones, ensuring more workers can access paid leave and avoid financial strain. This support would enable states to optimize their programs while promoting equity, job stability, and economic security for families.

New State Paid Family Leave Programs Could Benefit Millions of Low-Income Workers

H.R. 3089 and H.R. 3090 incentivize the creation of state paid family leave programs. H.R. 3089 requires workers to have worked 1,250 hours during the previous year in order to be eligible for paid family leave. That is the same standard adopted by the state of Delaware's new [paid leave program](#) (launching in 2026). To assess the potential impact of greater access to paid leave, the Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality examined data on workers in states without state paid leave programs and developed estimates for the number of workers in each state who could be eligible for new paid leave programs with the 1,250 hours standard.

If states without paid leave policies created programs with eligibility criteria similar to Delaware's, more than 140 million workers across 37 states could benefit (see Figure 1). Some examples of how many workers in different states could benefit from new paid leave programs include:

- In Texas, more than **13 million** workers could be eligible.
- In Mississippi, more than **1 million** workers could gain access.
- Georgia and Pennsylvania could both see more than **1.3 million** workers in the bottom third of the earnings distribution be eligible.
- In Iowa, more than **360,000** workers in the bottom third of earners could gain access.
- Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Michigan could all see more than **60% of all low-paid workers** in their state be eligible.

FIGURE 1: Millions of Workers Stand to Gain If States Create New Paid Leave Policies

Total and share of workers potentially eligible for Paid Family Leave if states without paid leave programs adopt new policies using Delaware’s eligibility standards.

| 37 States without Paid Leave | Workers at All Wage Levels | | | Low-Paid Workers | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|----------------------------------|--|--|
| | Total number of workers | Number who worked at least 1,250 hours in past 12 months | Percent who worked 1,250 or more hours | Total number of low-paid workers | Number who worked at least 1,250 hours in past 12 months | Percent who worked 1,250 or more hours |
| Alabama/AL | 2,517,848 | 2,014,061 | 80% | 842,766 | 573,400 | 68% |
| Alaska/AK | 407,710 | 308,601 | 76% | 136,002 | 89,225 | 66% |
| Arizona/AZ | 3,842,331 | 3,033,400 | 79% | 1,286,795 | 874,338 | 68% |
| Arkansas/AR | 1,498,885 | 1,213,578 | 81% | 500,175 | 355,084 | 71% |
| Florida/FL | 11,636,991 | 9,339,864 | 80% | 3,879,151 | 2,782,380 | 72% |
| Georgia/GA | 5,877,176 | 4,700,325 | 80% | 1,967,445 | 1,351,440 | 69% |
| Hawaii/HI | 756,237 | 589,993 | 78% | 252,088 | 173,494 | 69% |
| Idaho/ID | 1,043,823 | 784,857 | 75% | 348,331 | 215,846 | 62% |
| Illinois/IL | 6,888,129 | 5,422,196 | 79% | 2,298,735 | 1,525,685 | 66% |
| Indiana/IN | 3,699,990 | 2,893,723 | 78% | 1,234,544 | 790,945 | 64% |
| Iowa/IA | 1,808,130 | 1,397,150 | 77% | 602,898 | 363,625 | 60% |
| Kansas/KS | 1,645,468 | 1,277,084 | 78% | 548,908 | 352,820 | 64% |
| Kentucky/KY | 2,297,067 | 1,818,871 | 79% | 768,214 | 508,710 | 66% |
| Louisiana/LA | 2,244,201 | 1,788,115 | 80% | 762,022 | 533,416 | 70% |
| Maryland/MD | 3,467,609 | 2,808,044 | 81% | 1,155,896 | 804,407 | 70% |
| Michigan/MI | 5,307,728 | 4,053,102 | 76% | 1,795,668 | 1,084,088 | 60% |
| Minnesota/MN | 3,310,393 | 2,583,014 | 78% | 1,146,189 | 738,167 | 64% |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Mississippi/MS | 1,418,176 | 1,132,258 | 80% | 473,117 | 320,506 | 68% |
| Missouri/MO | 3,336,554 | 2,626,121 | 79% | 1,113,139 | 729,366 | 66% |
| Montana/MT | 625,015 | 474,991 | 76% | 208,369 | 136,579 | 66% |
| Nebraska/NE | 1,135,812 | 895,375 | 79% | 380,777 | 245,094 | 64% |
| Nevada/NV | 1,698,936 | 1,360,651 | 80% | 566,340 | 401,802 | 71% |
| New Hampshire/NH | 833,427 | 645,039 | 77% | 277,934 | 176,139 | 63% |
| New Mexico/NM | 1,055,705 | 818,971 | 78% | 352,792 | 243,951 | 69% |
| North Carolina/NC | 5,789,245 | 4,597,961 | 79% | 1,930,104 | 1,320,061 | 68% |
| North Dakota/ND | 461,068 | 360,072 | 78% | 153,819 | 98,391 | 64% |
| Ohio/OH | 6,354,099 | 4,958,611 | 78% | 2,118,208 | 1,316,315 | 62% |
| Oklahoma/OK | 2,037,718 | 1,626,798 | 80% | 679,418 | 465,895 | 69% |
| Pennsylvania/PA | 7,014,853 | 5,422,554 | 77% | 2,370,268 | 1,475,094 | 62% |
| South Carolina/SC | 2,797,330 | 2,209,232 | 79% | 940,190 | 633,263 | 67% |
| South Dakota/SD | 529,694 | 408,304 | 77% | 176,585 | 113,710 | 64% |
| Tennessee/TN | 3,759,587 | 2,987,703 | 79% | 1,255,303 | 846,955 | 67% |
| Texas/TX | 16,260,137 | 13,085,963 | 80% | 5,420,182 | 3,819,693 | 70% |
| Utah/UT | 1,917,204 | 1,429,349 | 75% | 639,356 | 374,282 | 59% |
| Vermont/VT | 374,051 | 277,229 | 74% | 132,769 | 81,411 | 61% |
| Virginia/VA | 4,807,382 | 3,844,501 | 80% | 1,602,757 | 1,079,926 | 67% |
| West Virginia/WV | 822,979 | 651,987 | 79% | 274,376 | 185,891 | 68% |
| Wisconsin/WI | 3,324,013 | 2,618,250 | 79% | 1,108,118 | 704,838 | 64% |
| Wyoming/WY | 319,274 | 248,424 | 78% | 106,436 | 68,711 | 65% |
| Total | 179,905,404 | 141,462,376 | 79% | 60,382,255 | 40,312,837 | 67% |

Note: This analysis is based on GCPI calculations of 2023 American Community Survey data using all workers with earnings over \$0 in the past 12 months. Low-paid workers are defined as workers with wages in the bottom third of the wage distribution.

Source: Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality, 2025. Authors' calculations of the [2023 American Community Survey](#).

Paid Family Leave Improves Overall Well-Being

Encouraging more states to adopt paid leave programs would allow the [millions of workers](#) without access to paid leave an option to care for themselves and their families. In fact, our analysis shows that adoption of paid family leave programs with standards similar to Delaware could lead to over 75% of workers becoming eligible in each state. State paid leave programs can directly [reduce inequality](#), ensuring low-paid workers have the same chance to care for a new child as higher-wage workers. Research has demonstrated other positive effects of paid leave, such as:

- Married parents with access to paid leave experience [more marital satisfaction, sleep longer](#), and are [more involved with their children](#).
- Employed mothers of 1–3 year olds increased their usual weekly work hours by [10–17%](#), with a corresponding increase in their wage income.
- California’s paid leave program [doubled the average bonding time](#) between new mothers and babies from 3 to 6 weeks and contributed to a 12 percent [reduction of postneonatal mortality](#) and overall improvement to [child health](#).