



NATIONAL ASIAN / PACIFIC ISLANDER AMERICAN  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

**National Asian Pacific Islander American Chamber of Commerce and Entrepreneurship  
(National ACE)**

**Statement for the Record  
House Education and Workforce Committee,  
Subcommittee on Workforce Protections**

**Hearing: Balancing Careers and Care:  
Examining Innovative Approaches to Paid Leave  
February 24, 2026  
Washington, D.C.**

National ACE respectfully submits the following statement for the record in response to the House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Workforce Protections hearing entitled “Balancing Careers and Care: Innovative Approaches to Paid Leave”, held on February 24, 2026.

National ACE is the leading organization representing Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI)-owned and all small businesses across the United States. National ACE seeks to improve the overall economic, political, and social well-being of small business owners by removing barriers to starting, retaining, and growing a business. We commend the Subcommittee for its focus on this critical issue and welcome the opportunity to share the perspective of small business owners and workers.

Access to paid family leave is a pressing need for small businesses and working families across the country. Many workers, including those in multigenerational households who serve as caregivers for older family members, face a heightened need for flexible, reliable leave policies. Yet small business owners, regardless of industry or background, often face structural barriers to offering competitive leave benefits, leaving both workers and employers at a disadvantage in attracting and retaining talent. Too many small business owners and workers are forced to make a difficult choice between caring for their families and keeping their businesses open. National ACE hears consistently from business owners across the country that what they need most are solutions built on flexibility, predictability, and shared responsibility.

National ACE has been a consistent and active voice in support of bipartisan efforts to expand paid leave access for workers and small businesses. In December 2024, National ACE applauded the Bipartisan House Working Group on Paid Leave upon the introduction of two discussion drafts that built on their legislative framework for paid family medical leave, noting

the importance of competitive grant programs that incentivize more states to offer paid family medical programs and the Interstate Paid Leave Action Network (I-PLAN) that will help harmonize existing paid leave programs across states.

In addition, National ACE President and CEO Chiling Tong joined members of the Bipartisan House Paid Family Leave Working Group, including Congresswoman Julia Letlow (R-LA), Congressman Don Beyer (D-VA), Congresswoman Stephanie Bice (R-OK), Congresswoman Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA), Congressman Jimmy Gomez (D-CA), and Congresswoman Mariannette Miller-Meeke (R-IA) at a press conference in May 2025 to speak in support of the *“More Paid Leave for More Americans Act.”* National ACE voiced strong support for the bill’s two major components: a competitive grant program to help states establish their own paid family leave programs, and the creation of the Interstate Paid Leave Action Network (IPLAN) to facilitate coordination and harmonization across state paid family and medical leave programs.

National ACE strongly supports the Subcommittee’s examination of innovative approaches to paid leave. The diversity of America’s small business community in size, industry, geography, and workforce composition demands solutions that are adaptable and workable across a wide range of contexts. State-based programs, supported by federal resources and coordination mechanisms like IPLAN, offer a promising model that respects the varied needs of employers and workers while expanding access to leave benefits. We are encouraged by the bipartisan spirit driving these legislative efforts. Expanding paid leave access should not be a partisan issue — it is a matter of economic security, workforce stability, and family well-being for all Americans and the small businesses that serve as the backbone of our economy.

National ACE urges the Subcommittee to continue its work to advance paid leave solutions that are flexible, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of small businesses and working families. We look forward to working with members of the Subcommittee, the Bipartisan House Paid Family Leave Working Group, and all relevant stakeholders to ensure that small business owners and their employees are heard and supported throughout the legislative process.