

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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MEMORANDUM

December 5, 2019

To: Members of the Committee on Oversight and Reform

Fr: Committee Staff

Re: Hearing on “Examining the Need for Comprehensive National Paid Family and Medical Leave”

On **Tuesday, December 10, 2019 at 10:00 a.m., in room 2154 of the Rayburn House Office Building**, the Committee will hold a hearing on the lack of access to comprehensive national paid family and medical leave in the United States, and policies to improve access.

I. BACKGROUND

Paid family and medical leave provides employees with compensated time away from work for significant family caregiving needs—including pregnancy, the arrival of a new child, or the serious illness of a close family member—and personal medical needs.¹

Despite broad public support, the United States is one of only two nations in the world that does not provide any form of paid leave.² Under current federal law, unpaid leave is available to fewer than sixty percent of employees in America, many of whom cannot afford to take it.³

Although the Family and Medical Leave Act provided access to unpaid leave to a subset of employees in the United States—including public employees, employees at elementary and secondary schools, and private employees with large employers—more than twenty-five years ago, Congress has yet to enact a comprehensive national paid family and medical leave

¹ Congressional Research Service, *Paid Leave in the United States* (May 29, 2019) (online at fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R44835.pdf) (R44835).

² *America is the Only Rich Country Without a Law on Paid Leave for New Parents*, *The Economist* (July 28, 2019) (online at www.economist.com/united-states/2019/07/18/america-is-the-only-rich-country-without-a-law-on-paid-leave-for-new-parents).

³ *FMLA Not Really Working for Many Employees*, National Public Radio (Feb. 5, 2013) (online at www.npr.org/2013/02/05/171078451/fmla-not-really-working-for-many-employees).

program.⁴ Proposals have been introduced in the 116th Congress to improve access to comprehensive paid family and medical leave for federal employees and all workers.

II. HEARING PURPOSE

The purpose of the hearing is to examine the lack of access to paid family and medical leave under current federal law, as well as the need for a comprehensive national paid family and medical leave program in the United States.

III. WITNESSES

Vicki Shabo
Senior Fellow, Paid Leave Policy and Strategy, Better Life Lab
New America

The Honorable Robert Asaro-Angelo
Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Additional Witnesses TBD

Staff contact: Theresa Chalhoub and Miles Lichtman at (202) 225-5051.

⁴ Department of Labor, *Fact Sheet #28: The Family and Medical Leave Act* (online at www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs28.pdf) (accessed Dec. 5, 2019).