

House Oversight and Reform Committee
Paid family and medical leave
Written Statement by Jenna Johnson, Head of Patagonia, Inc
June 23, 2021

Our founder, Yvon Chouinard, says it best in his memoir, *Let My People Go Surfing*:

“Our benefits package is generous but strategic. Each benefit makes good business sense for us. We offer comprehensive health insurance, even to part-time employees. We provide on-site child care because we know parents are more productive if they’re not worrying about the safety and well-being of their children. When it opened in 1984, our Great Pacific Child Development Center (GPCDC) was one of only 120 on-site child-care centers in the country. It includes an infant care room for children as young as eight weeks and rooms progressively for toddlers to kindergarteners. The Kids Club, for school-age children, picks up children at the end of the school day and bring them back to GPCDC saving their parents from having to make the drive and from worrying about after school care... Children’s laughter and chatter are among the regular sounds of our business...At Patagonia, our child development facility is producing one of our best products, excellent kids.”

At Patagonia, we support all of our employees — salary and hourly — with generous paid family and sick leave as well as on-site childcare at our Ventura, CA [headquarters and our Reno, NV](#) distribution center. That’s not just the ethical thing to do, but it’s foundational to our mission, which is to save the home planet.

We have offered most of these benefits for more than 20 years. We opened our childcare center at our headquarters in 1984, back when we were a small business. Patagonia employees give more to the company because the company acts as a partner in life, not an obstacle.

We also end up recouping most of the cost of these benefits because they result in high retention rates and help us attract top talent. The vast majority of our new moms return to work after maternity leave, resulting in a workforce that is at least 50 percent women, including 50 percent of women in upper management roles. I’ve been fortunate to enjoy these benefits firsthand: My kids attended our childcare program, and I am in a leadership role today in part because of the support Patagonia offered to me as a new mother.

Patagonia believes every employer in our country, including and especially the federal government, should offer paid family and medical leave. We have decades of business experience and generations of families that we have learned from – we will all reap the benefits from these important policies.

Thank you.