
US House Committee on Oversight and Reform

**“Leading by Example: The Need for
Comprehensive Paid Leave for the Federal
Workforce and Beyond.”**

Submitted By: Ms. Karen Rainey, National President

Federally Employed Women (FEW)

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A STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

KAREN RAINEY, FEW NATIONAL PRESIDENT

The coronavirus pandemic has uncovered the serious consequences faced by many working women when they lack access to paid leave. Those on the front line are overwhelmingly federal workers and more specifically, women.

Federally Employed Women (FEW) is a private, non-profit organization founded in 1968 to address the equity, diversity and inclusion of women. FEW works as an advocacy group to improve the status of women employed by the federal government. Further, FEW was formed to ensure that there would always be an organization dedicated to promoting equality for women and addressing concerns of women in the Federal workforce to include family and medical leave, pay equality and supporting the Equal Rights Amendment.

The coronavirus pandemic has made it clear the vital role women play in our economy and how they provide so many families financial stability. Women employed by the federal government are on the front lines of the pandemic at work and at home, disproportionately harmed by several government shut-downs, and inadequate caregiving support.

Large numbers of women made the difficult choice of leaving the workforce to care for their children or elderly family members when everything shut down. Women are often the default caregivers, and they often make less, so it makes sense for them to give up their jobs.

And even as the promise of vaccination offers hope that the pandemic will end sometime in 2021, the long-term health and caregiving consequences of COVID-19 are just beginning to surface. The United States had more than 20 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 by late 2020; an estimated 10 to 15 percent – 1.7 to 3.4 million people – will experience persistent or relapsing symptoms, which can interfere with the ability to work or require care from a loved one.

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed into law as part of the American Rescue Plan, emergency paid leave rights to federal employees for certain COVID-19 health related needs, which unfortunately ends on September 30, 2021, or until the funds run out. We can do more to help those who humbly serve our country and keep America running.

FEW applauds the efforts of Chairman Maloney and the House Oversight Reform Committee, by having a hearing on comprehensive paid leave in answer to the sacrifice federal workers make in order to provide service to millions of Americans in spite of the risk they might incur. Stronger federal paid leave policies could be a game-changer for a lot of American families by helping so many women.

The U.S. government should always be a model employer for the millions of American workers and there is importance for support of this bill, the “Comprehensive Paid Leave for Federal Employees H.R. 564,” introduced by Representative Maloney. FEW believes that support for H.R. 564 will provide relief for federal employees, so that may appropriately care for themselves, their families and ultimately take care of the business of the American people.