

August 19, 2019

Dear Conferees:

We, the undersigned organizations, **urge you to keep the House-passed Federal Employee Paid Leave Act provision in the National Defense Authorization Act conference agreement.** The Federal Employee Paid Leave Act would provide 12 weeks of paid leave for the birth, adoption or foster placement of a new child; to care for a spouse, child or parent; for particular military caregiving and leave purposes; and for personal health reasons to federal workers who are eligible for job protected, unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

With more than 2 million employees, the federal government is the nation's largest employer, yet provides no paid family and medical leave. This leaves federal workers forced to choose between a paycheck and caring for a loved one, a newborn or themselves. The Federal Employee Paid Leave Act would not provide employees with additional leave time; it would simply ensure that federal employees can receive full pay during their 12 weeks of FMLA leave.

Paid leave would help not just federal employees, but the entire federal government. With access to paid leave, many individuals can remain in the workforce when they face caregiving responsibilities. Women who take paid leave are more likely to be working within a year after giving birth than those who take no leave.¹ Paid leave helps reduce turnover, which is estimated to cost between 16 and 200 percent of a worker's annual salary.

Providing paid leave to federal workers will help the federal government retain key employees and attract the best workers. The federal workforce is aging, creating a retention and recruiting crisis. In 2017, the number of full-time federal employees older than 50 years old was nearly eight times the number under 30.² An increase in satisfaction with family-friendly policies has been shown to reduce turnover intention by 37.5 percent in federal agencies.³ Further, paid family and medical leave is key to the federal government's competitiveness as more top companies introduce new or expanded paid leave policies.⁴

Paid leave supports the health and well-being of employees and their families. New mothers who take paid leave are more likely to take the amount of time away from work recommended by doctors,⁵ and their children are more likely to be breastfed, receive medical check-ups and get critical immunizations.⁶ When children are seriously ill, the presence of a parent shortens a child's hospital stay by 31 percent;⁷ active parental involvement in a child's hospital care may head off future health problems,⁸ especially for children with chronic health conditions, and thus reduce costs. Paid leave also lets people support family members with serious health conditions, helping them fulfill treatment plans, manage their care, and avoid complications and hospital readmissions.⁹ Paid leave is not just good human resource management; it sends a message about the value we place on family.

There is a growing consensus across the country that paid leave is a necessity. Eight states and the District of Columbia have passed comprehensive paid family and medical leave programs and dozens of municipalities across the country guarantee paid leave to their employees. Millions of workers have filed claims in the four states that have implemented paid leave programs, and evidence shows that paid leave benefits both employees and employers¹⁰ and has high levels of public support – 84 percent of voters support a comprehensive paid family and medical leave policy that covers all people who work.¹¹

The Federal Employee Paid Leave Act would provide critical support to federal employees when they need time to care – whether for themselves, their families, or a new child. We urge you to stand with the more than two million federal workers and their families by keeping the Federal Employee Paid Leave Act provision in the National Defense Authorization Act conference agreement.

Sincerely,

1,000 Days

2020 Mom

9to5, National Association of Working Women

All-Options

Alzheimer's Orange County

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Association of University Women (AAUW)

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE)

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

American Foreign Service Association

American Medical Women's Association

American Psychiatric Association Women's Caucus

The Arc of the United States

Baby Café USA

Caring Across Generations

Center for American Progress

Center for Parental Leave Leadership

The Center on Immigration at Cabrini University

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Chicago Foundation for Women

Child Care Aware of America

Citizen Action of New York

Coalition of Labor Union Women

Coalition on Human Needs

Early Childhood Alliance

EMC Strategies

Equal Exchange

FAA Managers Association

Family Equality

Family Values @ Work

Family Voices

Federally Employed Women
Federal Managers Association (FMA)
First Focus Campaign for Children
Food Chain Workers Alliance
FreeFrom
Hope for HIE
Indiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Indiana Institute for Working Families
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
International Association of Fire Fighters
ISAIAH
Jews United for Justice
Justice in Aging
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition
Labor Project for Working Families in partnership with Family Values @ Work
Laundry Workers Center
Maine Women's Lobby
Main Street Alliance
Make It Work Nevada
MANA, A National Latina Organization
Many Languages One Voice
Marion County Commission on Youth, Inc.
MomsRising
NARAL Pro-Choice America
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE)
National Council of Jewish Women
National Employment Law Project
National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE)
National Health Law Program
National Institute for Reproductive Health (NIRH)
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Military Family Association
National Network of Abortion Funds
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU)
National WIC Association
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
NJ Citizen Action
PathWays PA
People For the American Way
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
PL+US: Paid Leave for the United States
Professional Managers Association
Senior Executives Association (SEA)
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)
Shriver Center on Poverty Law

Street Vendors Association of Chicago
TakeAction Minnesota
Union for Reform Judaism
United States Breastfeeding Committee
UsAgainstAlzheimer's
Voices for Progress
Women and Girls Foundation of Southwest Pennsylvania
Women Employed
Women of Reform Judaism
Women's Fund of Rhode Island
Women's Law Project
YWCA USA
ZERO TO THREE

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