

Thank you Chairman Connolly, Ranking Member Meadows, and fellow members of the committee for the opportunity to testify about a bipartisan policy approach that positions the federal government to compete for the next generation of top talent that will serve the American people, H.R. 1534 the Federal Employee Paid Leave Act.

The Federal workforce is aging and our economy is changing. In 2017, the average age of the US federal worker was 47.5 years. At the end of 2018, only 6% of the federal workforce was under the age of 30.

More broadly throughout our country, women serve as the sole or primary breadwinners in 40% of all households with children under the age of 18 and 2 out of 3 families now depend on the wages of working moms.

These glaring statistics reveal a pressing need to recruit the next generation of talented civil servants to fill the coming retirement void while also allowing the ability for aging workers to care for themselves and their loved ones.

The Federal Employee Paid Leave Act is an important and long overdue step that will make our federal workforce better positioned to effectively serve the American people today and in the future.

The Federal Employee Paid Leave Act provides federal employees with 12 weeks paid leave in a calendar year for:

- the birth, fostering, or adoption of a child – applying to all parents;
- the care of an ill spouse, child, or parent;
- a serious personal medical condition; or
- a qualifying circumstance due to a spouse, child, or parent assigned to active duty military.

The Federal government needs to lead from the front when it comes to family friendly workplace policies and has a unique opportunity to do so with my bill that will provide a critical benefit to over 2 million Americans.

According to a UN study, out of 187 countries, only 2 countries on earth did not allow paid time off for the birth of a child. The United States, and Papua New Guinea. 185 countries cannot be wrong.

The research on the benefits of paid leave speaks for itself.

Family friendly policies reduce turnover intention by 37.5% in federal agencies, turnover that is expensive and costs between 16 and 200 percent of a worker's annual salary.

Studies also indicate we could prevent the departure of 2,650 female employees per year,

saving the government \$50 million per year in costs associated with employee turnover.

Paid family leave improves productivity, reduces turnover, boosts morale and attracts more talent. It also provides a benefit to families and the broader economy.

Paid leave is associated with reduced infant mortality, improved child and maternal health, and higher labor force participation for women, which equates to higher family incomes and growth in the economy as a whole.

Federal employees have suffered years of pay freezes and government shutdowns. These are not the actions of a model employer. Job security, a respectful workplace, and adequate pay and benefits are the least we should provide to retain and attract the top-tier

individuals we need to help run our government agencies.

The U.S. federal workforce provides invaluable and essential services that keep our country safe and prosperous.

Federal employees research the next medical breakthrough, protect our environment, secure our airports and infrastructure, keep us safe, inspect our food, monitor banks and so much more.

These men and women dedicate their lives in service to their country and it is time our country does more to recognize all that they do for us.

My bipartisan legislation has 47 cosponsors and was included in the House passed FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act. The Senate version did not include paid family leave. It is now being worked through in the conference

committee and I am hopeful that Congress will retain this provision in the final bill.

I have two letters in support of FEPLA here, one led by the Federal Postal Coalition and signed by 21 public service unions. The other led by the National Partnership for Women and Families and cosigned by 94 organizations who represent federal workers and advocate on behalf of family friendly workplace policies. I'd like to enter these letters into the record.

Policies that enable workers to care for themselves and their families without risking their jobs or economic security are good for workers, families, employers, and our nation.

It is well past time that our nation truly honors families by offering this basic benefit for the federal workforce.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

