

July 11, 2018

Dear Member of Congress,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and the tens of millions of working families we represent, we **urge you to support the Family And Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act (S. 337/H.R. 947)**. The FAMILY Act would create a national family and medical leave insurance program to help ensure that people who work can take the time they need to address serious health and caregiving needs. It would help support working families' economic security, promote gender equity in workplaces, create a more level playing field for businesses of all sizes and strengthen our economy. The FAMILY Act is the national paid family and medical leave plan voters want and our country needs.

**The benefits of paid family and medical leave are well documented, yet the vast majority of working people in the United States do not have access to this basic protection.** More than 100 million people – or 85 percent of workers – do not have paid family leave through their jobs, and more than 60 percent lack access to paid personal medical leave through their employer.<sup>1</sup> Access rates for workers in lower-wage jobs are even lower, and most recent private sector advances are disproportionately concentrated in higher-skill industries and among higher-paid employees, creating even greater disparities between lower- and higher-paid workers.<sup>2</sup> Even unpaid leave through the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is inaccessible to nearly two-thirds of working people, either because of eligibility restrictions or because they simply cannot afford to take unpaid leave.<sup>3</sup> This means that when serious personal or family health needs inevitably arise, people face impossible choices between their families' well-being, their financial security and their jobs.

**The FAMILY Act would create a strong, inclusive national paid family and medical leave insurance program and set a nationwide paid leave baseline.** Employees would earn two-thirds of their wages, up to a cap, for a limited period of time (up to 60 workdays, or 12 workweeks in a year) to address their own serious health issue, including pregnancy or childbirth; to deal with the serious health issue of a family member; to care for a new child; and for certain military caregiving and leave purposes. Employees, employers and self-employed workers would fund both the benefits and the administrative costs of the program by contributing a small amount in each pay period to a self-sustaining fund, administered through a new Office of Paid Family and Medical Leave. Eligibility rules would allow younger, part-time, low-wage and contingent workers to contribute and benefit, regardless of their employer's size or their length of time on the job.

**The FAMILY Act builds on successful state programs.** California has had a paid family and medical leave insurance program in place since 2004, New Jersey since 2009, Rhode Island since 2014 and New York since 2018. Strong new programs will take effect in Washington state and the District of Columbia in 2020 and Massachusetts in 2021. Evidence from the existing state programs shows these programs' value and affordability; all are financially sound and self-sustaining, and each state that has paid leave in place has or is exploring ways to make them even more accessible to people who need family leave. Analyses of California's law show that both employers and employees benefit from the program.<sup>4</sup> In New Jersey, the program's costs have been lower than expected and public attitudes toward the program are favorable.<sup>5</sup> Early research on Rhode Island's program found positive effects

for new parents, and a majority of small- and medium-sized employers were in favor of the program one year after it took effect.<sup>6</sup>

**The FAMILY Act would address the full range of care needs people face, including the growing need to provide elder care.** Changing demographics mean more adults will need elder care and the number of potential family caregivers is shrinking: For every person age 80 and older, the number of potential family caregivers will fall from about seven in 2010 to four by 2030, and then to less than three by 2050.<sup>7</sup> It is also important to note that more than 75 percent of people who take family or medical leave each year do so for reasons other than maternity or paternity care. They take leave to care for family members with serious illnesses, injuries or disabilities or for their own serious health issue.<sup>8</sup> The majority of parents, adult children and spouses who provide care for ill family members or children with disabilities also have paying jobs, and most work more than 30 hours per week while also managing their caregiving responsibilities.<sup>9</sup> The majority of military caregivers – and more than three-quarters of caregivers for post-9/11 wounded warriors – are also in the labor force.<sup>10</sup>

**The FAMILY Act would support improved health outcomes and could lower health care costs.** New mothers who take paid leave are more likely to take the amount of time away from work recommended by doctors,<sup>11</sup> and their children are more likely to be breastfed, receive medical check-ups and get critical immunizations.<sup>12</sup> When children are seriously ill, the presence of a parent shortens a child's hospital stay by 31 percent;<sup>13</sup> active parental involvement in a child's hospital care may head off future health problems, especially for children with chronic health conditions,<sup>14</sup> and thus reduce costs. Paid leave also lets people help older family members recover from serious illnesses, fulfill treatment plans, and avoid complications and hospital readmissions.<sup>15</sup> Early research has found that California's paid leave program reduced nursing home utilization.<sup>16</sup> And, for the millions of families in communities that are struggling with opioid and other substance use disorders, paid leave supports family caregivers, who play a key role in care and recovery by helping loved ones with health care arrangements and treatment.<sup>17</sup>

**The FAMILY Act also would strengthen large and small businesses and support entrepreneurs.** Paid leave reduces turnover costs – typically about one-fifth of an employee's salary<sup>18</sup> – and increases employee loyalty. In California, nine out of 10 businesses surveyed reported positive effects or no impacts on profitability and productivity after the state's paid leave program went into effect.<sup>19</sup> Small businesses reported even more positive or neutral outcomes than larger businesses.<sup>20</sup> Small business owners from across the nation expect that the FAMILY Act model would help level the playing field with large corporations, improve worker retention, productivity and morale, and help protect their economic security if an accident or medical emergency occurs.<sup>21</sup> This is part of the reason that 70 percent of small businesses surveyed nationwide support the FAMILY Act approach of shared payroll deductions.<sup>22</sup> By including self-employed people, the FAMILY Act would also help entrepreneurs balance the risks of starting a new business with the need to ensure their families' health and security.

**National paid family and medical leave has broad support from voters across party lines.** Supermajorities of voters across party lines support a comprehensive, 12-week national

paid family and medical leave law, including 66 percent of Republicans, 77 percent of independents and 93 percent of Democrats. Nearly two-thirds of voters (64 percent) say they would “strongly favor” such a law.<sup>23</sup> In focus groups conducted with conservative and independent voters in September 2017, voters preferred the FAMILY Act’s “personal and family security fund” model over an employer tax credit, tax-free savings account or a limited parents-only leave program.<sup>24</sup> Additional qualitative research conducted around the same time shows voters prefer a national plan that covers all family relationships and includes employment protections.<sup>25</sup>

**It is well past time for the United States to adopt a nationwide paid family and medical leave standard – but policy details matter tremendously.** Disparities in people’s access to paid leave, changing demographics and the realities working families face today require that any national plan be comprehensive of working people’s needs as reflected in the FMLA, inclusive of all working people across the United States and provide a meaningful duration of leave and wage replacement rate to make taking leave financially possible for all working people. Responsible governance requires that any plan be affordable, cost-effective and sustainably funded with new revenue – not funded by cutting or reducing benefits from programs people rely on. Any plan that fails to meet these tests is unacceptable.

**The FAMILY Act is the only national paid family and medical leave proposal that reflects what most people in the United States need.** We urge you to support and co-sponsor this essential legislation today and to reject inadequate proposals that would fail to meet the needs of the nation’s workforce, families or businesses – and that would do more harm than good.

Sincerely,

### **National Organizations**

1,000 Days

9to5, National Association of Working Women

A Better Balance

American Academy of Nursing

American Association of People with Disabilities

American Association of University Women (AAUW)

American Civil Liberties Union

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

American Medical Student Association

American Medical Women's Association

American Psychological Association

American Public Health Association

American Society on Aging

American Sustainable Business Council

A. Philip Randolph Institute

Association of Flight Attendants-CWA

Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (ARHP)

Association of University Centers on Disabilities

Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses

Autistic Self Advocacy Network  
Bend the Arc Jewish Action  
Black Women's Health Imperative  
Black Women's Roundtable  
Caregiver Action Network  
Catalyst  
Center for American Progress Action Fund  
Center for Community Change Action  
Center for Popular Democracy Action  
ChangeLab Solutions  
CLASP  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Communications Workers of America (CWA)  
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces  
Demos  
Ecumenical Poverty Initiative  
Every Child Matters  
Faith in Public Life  
Family Equality Council  
Family Values @ Work  
Family Voices  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
The Gerontological Society of America  
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.  
Hispanic Federation  
Human Rights Watch  
Interfaith Worker Justice  
Jewish Women International  
Jobs With Justice  
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
Main Street Alliance  
Mi Familia Vota  
Mom2Mom Global  
MomsRising  
NAACP  
NARAL Pro-Choice America  
National Alliance for Caregiving  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)  
National Association for Rural Mental Health  
National Association of County Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Directors  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Center for Lesbian Rights  
National Center for Transgender Equality  
National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Education Association  
National Employment Law Project  
National Employment Lawyers Association  
National Health Law Program

National Institute for Reproductive Health (NIRH)  
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund  
National Network to End Domestic Violence  
National Organization for Women  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Respite Coalition  
National Women's Health Network  
National Women's Law Center  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
Organization United for Respect at Walmart  
Oxfam America  
ParentsTogether  
Partnership For America's Children  
People For the American Way  
People's Action Institute  
Physicians for Reproductive Health  
PL+US: Paid Leave for the U.S.  
Poligon Education Fund  
Promundo-US  
Public Advocacy for Kids  
RESULTS  
ROC United  
SEIU  
Small Business Majority  
TASH  
U.S. Breastfeeding Committee  
U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce  
UltraViolet  
Union for Reform Judaism  
United Food and Commercial Workers International Union  
United State of Women  
United Steelworkers  
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity  
Voices for Progress  
Women of Reform Judaism  
The Women's Caucus of the American Psychiatric Association  
Women's Media Center  
Workplace Fairness  
Young Invincibles  
YWCA USA  
ZERO TO THREE

**Alabama**

AIDS Alabama

**California**

2020 Mom

Asset Building Strategies

Business and Professional Women  
BreastfeedLA  
CA Work & Family Coalition  
California Breastfeeding Coalition  
Center for WorkLife Law, University of California, Hastings College of Law  
Child Care Law Center  
EMC Strategies  
Equal Rights Advocates  
Family Voices of California  
Food Chain Workers Alliance  
Futures Without Violence  
Legal Aid at Work  
Maternal Mental Health NOW  
National Council of Jewish Women, Los Angeles Section  
Parent Voices CA  
YWCA Berkeley/Oakland  
YWCA San Francisco & Marin

### **Colorado**

13th Moon Midwifery  
9to5 Colorado  
All Families Deserve a Chance Coalition  
Colorado Coalition for the Homeless  
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative  
Colorado Fiscal Institute  
Colorado Lactation Consultant Association  
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR)  
Movement Advancement Project  
NARAL Pro-Choice Colorado  
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
National Council of Jewish Women, CO. State Policy Advocate, Advocacy Chair, Advocacy Committee  
SynerGenius Telepresence  
United for a New Economy  
Women's Lobby of Colorado

### **Connecticut**

All Our Kin  
Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition  
Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)  
Connecticut Working Families Organization  
Hispanic Federation – CT

### **Delaware**

Breastfeeding Coalition of Delaware  
Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families

### **District of Columbia**

Herd on the Hill  
Jacobs Institute of Women's Health  
Jews United for Justice

### **Florida**

Advocacy Chair National Council of Jewish Women Palm Beach Section  
Central Florida Jobs with Justice  
FL Alliance of Community Development Corporations, Inc.  
Hispanic Federation - FL  
National Council of Jewish Women Florida State Policy Advocate Advocacy Chair  
National Council of Jewish Women, Florida  
National Council of Jewish Women, Valencia Shores Section  
Organize Florida

### **Hawaii**

Hawaii Children's Action Network  
Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Hawaii  
YWCA O'ahu

### **Illinois**

AIDS Foundation of Chicago  
EverThrive Illinois  
HealthConnect One  
National Council of Jewish Women, South Cook Section, State Policy Advocate  
NCJW Illinois, State Policy Advocate  
Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry  
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
Women Employed  
YWCA of the University of Illinois

### **Indiana**

Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
Indiana Institute for Working Families

### **Iowa**

Leadership Team of the Sisters of Charity, BVM

### **Kansas**

Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc.

### **Kentucky**

Kentuckiana Lactation Improvement Coalition  
Kentucky Equal Justice Center  
Lactation Improvement Network Of Kentucky

### **Louisiana**

National Council of Jewish Women, Greater New Orleans Section

**Maine**

Maine Women's Lobby

**Maryland**

Jews United for Justice

Job Opportunities Task Force

Lactation Education Resources

Leadership for Education Equity

Maryland Family Network

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

Public Justice Center

Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition

**Massachusetts**

Equal Exchange

Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action

Massachusetts Communities Action Network

**Michigan**

Sugar Law Center for Economic and Social Justice

**Minnesota**

Children's Defense Fund - Minnesota

ISALAH

Minnesota Association of Professional Employees

TakeAction Minnesota

**Missouri**

NARAL Pro-Choice Missouri

**Nebraska**

Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Justice Team

**Nevada**

Advanced Breastfeeding Support of Las Vegas

Make It Work Nevada

**New Hampshire**

Campaign for a Family Friendly Economy

Rights and Democracy

**New Jersey**

Anti-Poverty Network of New Jersey

New Jersey Citizen Action

NJ Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc.

NJ Time to Care Coalition



SPAN Parent Advocacy Network  
Union of Rutgers Administrators, AFT Local 1766

### **New Mexico**

Southwest Women's Law Center

### **New York**

AAUW of Rockland County  
Arrangements Abroad Inc.  
Center for Children's Initiatives  
Center for Frontline Retail  
The Children's Agenda  
Citizen Action of New York  
Early Care & Learning Council  
Fearless Talent Development Inc.  
Gender Equality Law Center  
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition  
Hope's Door  
Indivisible Westchester  
Labor-Religion Coalition of NYS  
League of Women Voters of St. Lawrence County, NY  
Legal Momentum  
Masten Block Club Coalition and the Board of Block Clubs of Buffalo & Erie County  
National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs-NYC (NFBPWC-NYC)  
New York Paid Leave Coalition  
New York Union Child Care Coalition  
PowHer New York  
Rios de Agua Viva United Church of Christ  
Westchester National Organization for Women  
Women's Research and Education Fund  
The YMCA of Greater Rochester  
YWCA of Binghamton & Broome County

### **North Carolina**

Action NC  
NARAL Pro-Choice North Carolina  
National Coalition of 100 Black Women Inc. - Queen City Metropolitan Chapter  
NC AFL-CIO  
NC Alliance for Retired Americans  
NC Child  
North Carolina Council of Churches  
North Carolina Justice Center  
North Carolina Women United  
Women AdvaNCe  
Working America North Carolina  
YWCA Asheville

### **North Dakota**

Family Voices of ND  
North Dakota Women's Network

### **Ohio**

Appalachian Breastfeeding Network  
Innovation Ohio  
NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio  
National Coalition of 100 Black Women Central Ohio  
National Council of Jewish Women, Ohio State Policy Advocate  
Ohio Domestic Violence Network  
The Ohio Women's Public Policy Network

### **Oregon**

Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO)  
Cascade AIDS Project  
Center for Parental Leave Leadership  
Children First for Oregon  
Family Forward Oregon  
NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon

### **Pennsylvania**

Maternity Care Coalition  
One PA  
PathWays PA  
Southwest PA National Organization For Women  
Women and Girls Foundation of Southwest Pennsylvania  
Women's Law Project  
YWCA Titusville

### **Rhode Island**

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

### **South Dakota**

Brookings Supports Breastfeeding

### **Tennessee**

Black Children's Institute of Tennessee  
State Policy Advocate National Council of Jewish Women - Tennessee

### **Vermont**

Hunger Free Vermont  
Main Street Alliance of VT  
Peace & Justice Center  
Vermont Family Network  
Voices for Vermont's Children

### **Virginia**

Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC)

NARAL Pro-Choice Virginia  
National Military Family Association  
Virginia Organizing

## Washington

Economic Opportunities Institute  
Legal Voice  
PAVE Family to Family Health Information Center  
YWCA Clark County

## West Virginia

WV Citizen Action Group

## Wisconsin

9to5 Wisconsin  
Keep Families First Coalition  
Marathon County Democratic Party  
Mid-Day Women's Alliance of Appleton, WI  
Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation  
Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health  
Wisconsin Breastfeeding Coalition  
Wisconsin Early Childhood Association

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