

CALIFORNIA FAMILIES NEED PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Right now only 17% of working people in the United States have access to paid family leave through their employer. [1] And although the current Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) allows some employees to take up to 12 weeks of job-protected unpaid leave, it only covers about 60 percent of employees. Further, many people who are eligible to take FMLA can't afford to take it, because FMLA's unpaid. This lack of paid, job-protected leave is why 1 in 4 new mothers is back at work within 10 days of having a baby [2] and also why 1 in 5 retirees leaves the workforce earlier than planned because they need time away from work to care for a spouse or loved one. [3]

Working families need and deserve a robust detail-driven paid family and medical leave policy. We need a plan that is accessible to all working people, inclusive when it comes defining family, affordable and cost-effective and sustainable for workers, employers, and taxpayers and provides a meaningful length of leave. ***Please read the following stories from California and take them to heart. Our families are counting on you.**

Inga, Yuber City

My mother lives in a different state. I needed paid family leave to provide care for her during and after surgery to her knee. I was greatly appreciative of this benefit during my time of commitment to my mother. My mom was less anxious and happy that I was able to be off with her during this time.

Maureen, Soledad

I did not have paid family leave when my husband had a stomach ulcer and had to skip a house payment ruining our

credit for a decade. We eventually made up the payment but it took over a year and our credit is still ruined for another few years. He was in the ICU for 10 days, another some days in the hospital proper and had to be in a nursing home for another 30 days and I had to manage the household affairs and could not work at my 40 hours a week job. As the FMLA was unpaid, it saved my job but we had to skip a mortgage payment and it was November by the time he got out and therefore close to Christmas which had to naturally be scaled back drastically.

Linda, San Diego

I recently had total hip replacement. I was unable to care for myself during the early recovery weeks. My husband took 2 weeks off work. Without the income from family leave we would not have been able to pay all of our bills.

Elaine, Forest Knolls

We've benefitted twice in the past two years from paid family leave. The first time, my son was born 8 weeks early and my husband was able to take some time off of work to visit the NICU frequently and help with our premature son's early needs (and to assist me, since I had experienced a life threatening medical condition which led to the early delivery).

A year later, my husband had open heart surgery and needed to take about a month off work completely to recover from the life-saving procedure.



**Working families in the United States
LOSE AT LEAST \$20.6 BILLION
IN WAGES EVERY YEAR
due to a lack of access to
paid family and medical leave**

Source: Sarah Jane Glynn and Danielle Corley, "The Cost of Work-Family Policy Inaction: Quantifying the Costs Families Currently Face as a Result of Lacking U.S. Work-Family Policies" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2016), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2016/09/22/143877/the-cost-of-inaction/>.)

Join the conversation on Twitter: @MomsRising would love to hear your hopes and plan for #Paid-FamilyLeave. For more stories from your state visit www.MomsRising.org

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[1] <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/workplace/paid-leave.html> [2] *In These Times: The Real War on Families*
[3] *Keeping Up with the Times: Supporting Family Caregivers with Workplace Leave Policies*, AARP Public Policy Institute

Cynthia, Los Angeles

Having cared for a loved one before and through an organ transplant witnessed first hand the importance of paid family leave in the success of survival.

Beverly, Hesperia

My husband of 35+ years went through extensive treatments for cancer that required days of hospitalizations for chemotherapy and frequent blood transfusions following chemo. We did as much as we could at home, but he often required professional care.

He couldn't drive and hospitalizations often left him confused. I was able to get paid time from work to be with him during all his appointments, chemo treatments and other care. Unfortunately he eventually stopped responding to treatments and died. But we were able to be together through the stresses of his care, including hospice, because of my employer's leave policies. It was a great comfort to him for me to help him negotiate the complexities of cancer care, and it was a great comfort to me to be with him through the final year of his life.

When he died, I felt like I had done everything that I could have to support him. Without the leave time he would often had to be alone for treatments and hospitalizations and I would have felt I failed him.

Erica, Napa

A short couple of months ago, one of my children had an accident where she had to have surgery and was not able to go to school or complete any of her daily activities such as getting up to go to the bathroom and getting herself dressed. I am a single parent and work full time. I had to take leave from working to care for her. If I didn't have paid family leave my other children would not be able to have food put on the table, much less a roof over their heads.

Elizabeth, San Diego

My mom had stage 4 cancer and needed constant care. It was too much for my dad and I needed to take off to care for my mom. It led to a lot of anxiety because my family income was completely slashed. My mom died but if she had lived longer, it would have led to financial ruin for me and my spouse.

Patrick, Sunnyvale

Many families need to take care of both elderly parents and very young children at the same time. Many times these responsibilities fall on women who are already underpaid. Additionally, affordable child care is a must for most families. It's time for Congress to enact a paid family leave policy, make sure that women are paid equally to men and make child care and infant care affordable for all families. Congress must enact these important family safeguards for all women because so many of these responsibilities fall on women who are already underpaid.

L. Adams, Escondido

Back in 2008 I had to quit my job in order to care for my mom; and that left me with no income and no health insurance! We were left to pay my mortgage etc out of her little pension & social security & savings.

Joy, Valencia

As a mother of two in California I was shocked to learn paid leave isn't available to all mothers. It's an important investment in our future given the first weeks and months are so critical to brain development.

Rebecca, Seal Beach

Both my mother and sister in law died in the same month and I was able to give end of life care and keep them home due to paid leave. This saved thousands of dollars in tax payer health costs and helped our family through this difficult time. All people need paid leave for family care.

Francesca, San Francisco

As a mother, I can tell you how hard it is to have to take unpaid leave to care for a newborn. I was lucky enough to have a few weeks of paid leave when my son was born but I also had to take 2 months unpaid. My son was born 7 weeks early and I could not work when he was tiny. I spent a month with him in the hospital and being able to care for him long enough after he was released was critical for his development. I was lucky enough to have enough money saved to be able to do this but this is not a decision a parent should have to make.

Kathy, Martinez

I am a recipient of the Paid Family Leave policy (California). Three years ago, my father was diagnosed with glioblastoma. After surgery, he needed daily radiation treatments for 6 weeks which required someone driving him to the hospital each morning. This someone was me. Without the Paid Family Leave policy, I would have lost a month and a half of pay as I endeavored to help my parents with this traumatic situation. It is an invaluable benefit.

Dakota, Ventura

I am a mom that lives in a State that offers paid family leave for 6 weeks - California - without this benefit, I would have had to return to work earlier after adopting my two children, ages 5 and 6, from Ethiopia. The adjustment of moving to another country after an international adoption is very challenging for children and families; the adjustment of adding any new child, via birth or adoption is challenging. Our kids deserve time to bond with their parents before they have to return to work. I believe all parents should receive paid leave in America. We are a country that should be able to do better for our parents and our children.