

# CONNECTICUT 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 Connecticut and take them to heart. Our families are counting on you.**

## **Charmaine, Meriden**

When my father in-law was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer, paid leave helped us to take time off from work to help care for him at home until he passed away. Having paid leave helped us by decreasing the financial burden it would cost us to put him in a facility at a cost of \$300 a day. But most of all it allowed us the opportunity to provide him person one-on-one care from a family member eliminating the stress of worrying if he was being cared for appropriately. It also gave us the piece of mind to know we still had our job to return to after he passed.

## **Lauren, Guilford**

After I had my son I had to quit my much needed job because I couldn't get ANY time off to care for my newborn. My husband also had no paid sick days, and the days he took were recorded as voluntary leave, which is looked down upon in his industry.

We suffered enough to be evicted from our apartment and depended on WIC to feed the whole family. If we had some paid leave, we would still be in our old apartment and we would have never needed the assistance in the first place. I think that a lot of state and federal dollars are wasted in this way, because I know I am not the only one. I'd be a working mom right now, but I needed to heal and parent my newborn, and my job didn't allow for that. In the most difficult time to find a job, I don't have one, while my son depends on me.

## **Ashley, New Haven**

As a new mother I, and my family, have felt the personal effects of lack of paid leave. I am torn between working and staying home with my child. It seems ridiculous that women are kept from contributing to the US economy because of forced choice to be with their young children and jeopardizing their careers or forgoing important time with their children to contribute to needed household income. Something needs to change!



**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](http://www.MomsRising.org)**

**MomsRising.org | MamásConPoder.org**

[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

### **Leslie, Stamford**

All employees of whatever size companies deserve paid family and medical leave. Many who are paid very low wages come in close contact with people. Whether servers, caretakers, teachers or others, they must go to work ill or without pay.

### **Monica, Storrs**

Paid family leave is key to achieving the work-life balance that so many people desire. I feel extremely fortunate to work for an employer that provides me with generous leave policies. Everyone should have access to family leave!

### **Carolina, Meriden**

Five years later, I am still financially feeling the effects of not having paid family leave when I gave birth to my children. This is more important than we can express in one text box. Please, I urge you to find a way to make it work for families in CT!

### **Peggy, Enfield**

Paid Leave is so very important. I have had to use it & it was invaluable. No one should have to choose between their job & their loved ones.

### **Lorie, Bridgeport**

I am now a full-time graduate student. Before I went back to school I was working full-time. After having my oldest child, I had to use up all of my sick and vacation time to have paid leave, and the last few weeks of my FMLA time were unpaid. I worked up until 2 days before my due date and my going into labor. My now ex-husband took off 1.5 months to be home and assist me with our daughter, which was completely unpaid. We were on a very tight budget to survive on one paycheck.

For my second pregnancy, I was forced to stop working at 36 weeks with my twins because my employer did not want to risk my going into labor while at work. My FMLA started from that point, so when I had my twins at 40 weeks, I only had 8 weeks of FMLA left to claim. I also ran out of sick and vacation time before the FMLA ran out, and with twins I was not even ready to go back to work after 8 weeks. I ultimately was forced to resign from the job because they could not hold the position for me any longer than the allotted FMLA-allowed time.

In both cases, I was stressed over my finances while still trying to focus on caring for my newborn babies and recuperating from the births. When I was working, I was dedicated to my job and often worked extra hours, taking work home. Then when I was in a point of need to focus on my new family members, I was still consumed with how much (or little) money I had to survive on.

### **Linda, Burlington**

Working with discharging families with their loved one dying I see on a daily basis the hardship this causes to families. Paid medical leave for all workers in America needs to be instituted.

### **Barbara, Bridgeport**

When we adopted our children from they were 8 & 3 years old. As the main breadwinner in our family I was concerned about helping them to acclimate to a new country, language, foods, smells, and managing work. that I had paid family and medical leave which I could take any way I needed to was the difference between being able to fulfill my dream of having children and not. I took 2 days a week for the school year which came out to exactly the time I was allowed. I still had 3/5 of my salary, and my medical benefits paid for because I was working. It was an amazing benefit and one I cherish the memories of for the time I got to spend with our children.

### **Dorothy, Old Saybrook**

When I had my children, I was fortunate enough to live in Canada where I got 17 weeks of paid leave and the chance to take up to two more months without pay with each child. Every family should have that time to be with their babies.

### **Katrina, New Haven**

Please guarantee paid family leave, this is a public health issue! As a Internationally Board Certified Lactation Consultant and student of Advanced Practice Nursing in the Midwifery specialty, I have come to know through patient interaction that this measure would greatly benefit the lifelong health of women and infants.

### **Melissa, Stonington**

Never had a day of paid leave after giving birth to two children, when I was sick with pneumonia, or when my mom was critically ill in the hospital. My husband was laid off from his job when our second child was a newborn. We struggled financially and barely maintained health insurance to cover our family.

### **Myrna, Harwinton**

My brother-in-law applied for and was granted unpaid family leave to care for my sister, who was hospitalized for surgery and its complications. She was in the hospital for three weeks. My sister is unemployed and was thrown off unemployment because she was too sick to speak with her state's unemployment office while hospitalized. My brother-in-law is worried about the forthcoming massive medical bills and having no income while he is off work under the FMLA. These are real people facing a real problem. Please support the FAMILY Act.

### **Carol, Bloomfield**

Years ago, I experienced times when I needed to be out of work for a bit to take care of my children, but there was no family leave available, and I could not afford to take time off. This is a very important matter.