MINNESOTA 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 Minnesota and take them to heart. Our families are counting on you.**

Hannah, St. Paul

Every time I have had a baby I had completely used up all my sick days just to cover a standard six week maternity leave. After I came back to work I had zero sick days to care for my children or myself, who inevitably are sick at some point over the Minnesota winter. Paid family leave would have solved this problem.

Also, I have experienced the difference that having my husband stay home with me after a new baby was born can make. For our first two children, my husband had to go back to work just days they were born. With my middle son, who was an incredibly difficult baby, I began to slide into depression as soon as he returned to work. I was caring for a very upset baby and a 23 month old on my own only a week after giving birth.

With my last son my husband had more accrued sick days and was able to take off three weeks. Even that short amount of time made all the difference, starting our new family out on the best foot with the support that we needed.

Please pass paid family leave. Take care of America's families means taking care of it's babies, children, parent, grandparents and workers. It's an investment that will return ten fold.

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/ .)

Jessica, Plymouth

I am a teacher and so is my husband, so when planning a family, we tried to shoot for having a baby in the summer to minimize the costs - no dice! Two January babies later, I have had to take 8 weeks unpaid leave, and used up all of my sick days.

I took 7 weeks off for my first child (the extra week was because I damaged my peroneal nerve giving birth and couldn't walk for 4 weeks) and 6 weeks for my second. My husband had 6 weeks unpaid leave available to him for our first child, but that got reduced to 3 weeks by the time we had out second.

I realize that we have it better than many many people in the US, but it's hard to remember that when you're handing off a barely 10 pound little spud to a complete stranger to care for so you can afford your home and preschool for your other child.

Join the conversation on Twitter: @MomsRising would love to hear your hopes and plan for #PaidFamilyLeave. 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