

NEW HAMPSHIRE 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 New Hampshire and take them to heart. Our families are counting on you.**

Esther, New Hampshire

My daughter had a difficult time breastfeeding at first. I spent the first month of her life with recurrent mastitis and painful, bleeding nipples. Finally, when she was four weeks old we discovered she was tongue-tied and had it remedied. Still, it took several weeks more for her to learn to nurse properly and comfortably. If I had not been able to take an extended maternity leave, I probably would not have been able to continue breastfeeding. This would have been detrimental to her health and to my feelings of success as a mother.

Mackenzie, Dover

Just food for thought: recently my mom was hospitalized because of a stroke. She has a brain tumor that needed to be looked after and will eventually be removed. I needed to take time off of work to care for her, but I am pregnant and trying to save up vacation time and sick time to use as maternity leave. I was forced to use vacation time and cut into what will be used as my maternity leave. Without paid family and medical leave, many folks in my generation will be forced to leave the workforce or face financial strain while they care for their parents and/or their children. The lack of this policy makes New Hampshire a less attractive place for young and aging families alike.

Anonymous, New Hampshire

When my second son was born, I hadn't accrued enough vacation days to allow for a 12-week paid maternity leave. My husband's salary couldn't support our growing family; missing even a month's paycheck would have made it impossible to pay even our most urgent bills. So, I spent the weeks before and after his birth desperately trying to negotiate with my employer, trying to find a way to care for my baby while maintaining my paycheck. This was emotionally draining at a time when I most needed my mental resources. Luckily for me, everything worked out in the end. But luck should have nothing to do with it. None of that should have happened to me, and none of it should happen to the women of America.



**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

Katherine, New Hampshire

I'm an expectant mom of twins and I only get two weeks of paid maternity leave. I cannot afford to not have a paycheck coming in. Hopefully my body will be healed enough to return to work after two weeks. If my sons are born and need to go to the NICU, I don't know what I'm going to do.

Jessica, Salem

I manage a small non profit, our staff is overwhelmingly female and overwhelmingly under 40. We are currently unable to offer any paid leave to our employees other than their paid sick and paid vacation. We offer an optional policy for our employees to purchase that can cover a leave, but with low salaries many struggle with the additional expense. I want to be able to do more for my employees but I cannot – a paid family leave program would level the playing field for employers and employees.

Anonymous, New Hampshire

When I had my baby I was not going to let anything interfere with her (and me) getting the health and emotional benefits of breastfeeding. Pumping at work eliminates the emotional benefits, plus it would be mostly impossible at my job. I had to quit. There would always be jobs but there would not always be a baby who needed me.

Fast forward a few years and I am working part time, we entered the Home Affordable Modification program to avoid foreclosure, we have compiled large credit card debt, family members have bailed us out at times, and we are still scraping by. My daughter will not be going to preschool with her peers because we can not afford it. Paid family leave would have allowed me to start off with income and keep a job to return to. That would have us in a very different position today.

Kristine, Laconia

My son has cancer, for the 2nd time. At this time he is not undergoing treatment; however he asked me to apply for FMLA so when he begins his his treatment again I will be available to help. I was told I am not eligible because he doesn't live in my house. He doesn't want his wife to be the sole person assisting him as her father passed away from cancer. Now I will have to use my vacation time to help him out & this will most definitely NOT be a vacation. These laws need to be re-vamped so we can be there for our families when they need us.

Anonymous, New Hampshire

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Sarah, Concord

Nobody should have to choose between a paycheck and taking care of a sick child. Paid family/medical leave brings basic fairness to the workplace and gives all kids the chance to grow up safe and healthy.

Alisa, Webster

About a year ago I had my son Xander and I worked for a hospital who had paid leave if I had earned enough hours to get paid while I was on maternity leave. This was a huge problem because I had started in a new position and hadn't earned enough hours to pay for me being out of work for the months I needed.

This in turn made my anxiety and depression worse and put stress on me as a new mom coping with providing for my son and making sure he had everything he needed and so that bills were paid. Since I didn't have hours earned to pay me on my leave I had to deplete my savings account to make it by and this to me should never happen in this day and age. Paid leave should be a basic human right.

Krista, Exeter

As a certified postpartum doula and lactation counselor, I see first hand how important it is for mothers to have time off of work to bond with their infants and begin solid breastfeeding relationships. Unfortunately, so many moms are stressed out about money and concerned about returning to work, that they never have a chance to just enjoy learning about their baby and their new role as a parent. Paid leave would alleviate so many concerns for parents and absolutely help with breastfeeding rates!

Madeline, Hanover

Having had to care for my son when he had a recurring benign brain tumor, I know what it is like to have to leave work to care for a family member. This bill makes a lot of sense and allows those to care for their loved ones without the fear of losing their jobs. Please support the Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act.

Paula, Seabrook

I breastfed all 3 of my kids while going back to work. It wasn't always easy. I was lucky that I did have paid time off, but I realize that today that is not always the case. Motherhood needs support at all levels.