

OREGON 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 Oregon and take them to heart. Our families are counting on you.**

Janet, Newport

The irony of my being a special education consultant/teacher is that I gave 100% to my students but was not allowed to do that for my own children. I had to cobble together vacation and sick leave to give birth to my first son. When I returned to work, my supervisor scrutinized the time that I took to pump my breasts to extract milk for my infant (in closets and teacher bathrooms). When I gave birth to my second son, I asked for half-time work so that I could meet the needs of nursing my children, but the administration would not grant that. I had to resign to be able to be there for my children.

I lost my pension, my income, the job that I was respected for doing because of the lack of family-friendly policies in the USA.

Laura, Portland

I work for a school district in Washington state. I had 36 Days of sick leave saved up over a period of three years. luckily, my baby was due in April, so I was able to use all 36 of my days, and about a week of unpaid leave, to be able to spend a good chunk of time with her. I then went back to work for the last two weeks of the school year so I wouldn't lose my employee coverage of my health insurance. Then I had this summer to really enjoy with my baby after those two weeks yes.

In September, I went back to work in Earnest, and it was so hard. She was 4 months old and we were so bonded, it broke my heart to leave her. I am lucky that I had those sick days, but I had to spend the rest of the year knowing that I only had 1 year's worth of leave (12 days), and so having another baby at this point it's not really an option financially because of my lack of maternity leave.

We act like we want American families to have children, but in reality we don't there are no policies in place to help us make it work, daycare prices are through the roof, and medical system is a complete laughing stock of the world. We need change and we need it now.

Thomas, Monroe

Caretakers work AND care take. Family leave is not for just babies!



**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

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

Lynn, Springfield

Since I had my children later than average age, we were faced with caring for my grandparents and child at the same time. No paid time off and we took turns for I did it on my hours that I was off work. My mom helped me out the same time on her time off work. Workplaces make it very difficult on those in these positions.

Margaret, Portland

I am a registered nurse at OHSU. Going about my daily care for seriously ill Oregonians, I quickly became aware of how one diagnosis can send an entire family's life into disarray. I also noticed how difficult it was for family members to take care of the patient directly. The loss of the patient's income doubled with the potential loss of income and health insurance from the caregiver was just too much to bear. Unfortunately, placing loved ones in nursing homes became the impossible and heart-breaking reality. I ask every member of the Legislature to think about their aging parents, or perhaps a loved one with cancer or heart disease. Wouldn't you want the choice to take a few months off from work in order to provide care in your home for your wife, husband, parents, or child? Paid family and medical leave is not just a suggestion of a new tax that should be easily brushed away from the public's attention. Oregonians should be able to take care of each other without fear of bankruptcy, job loss, and termination of crucial health benefits. This is a moral issue.

In January of 2016, I had a baby. What should have been a joyous occasion was marred by health complications to no fault of my own. My husband and I carefully planned and saved for my maternity leave for over a year, but we could not have expected that both of us would be needed at home as my health was quite poor afterward. My husband's employer did not offer any leave, and we would have lost our health insurance had he resigned. Like many new parents before us, we made the difficult choice to have my husband return to work one week after our son was born, leaving me to try to heal on my own while caring for our son. I ask all Legislators to picture a sick and traumatized new mother, who had done everything "right" to have a maternity leave free of so-called "taxpayer subsidy", trying to care for a newborn alone. This is a moral issue.

I share with you my deeply personal experiences because this bill needs a face. It needs us to stop suffering in silence and ask our elected officials for the support we deserve. Additionally, our children are suffering when their parents are not present to nurture and raise them in low-stress homes that they too deserve. Oregonians will pay dearly if we do not open our eyes and see this unsustainable situation for what it is. No longer do we live in a society where grandparents are readily available to help - they are still working into their 60s and 70s to make ends meet. No longer do we have a cost of living where a mother can choose to be a homemaker, making maternity leave a non-issue. No longer do we have a health system in which patients can remain hospitalized to truly recover from illness - they are given discharge instructions or a nursing home placement after a two-day admission. This is a moral issue.

Lee, Yoncalla

I was able to be by my mother's side during her entire cancer treatments. One of us was with her 24 hours in the hospital and home. What amazed me was seeing other patients having the same cancer treatments and other close to death medical issues we'd only see them have visitors come to visit them mostly 7am ish and then the other rush was 5pm ish (before work and after work). It's really disgusting this issue of allowing our loved ones to face serious medical conditions and/or die alone.

Rae, Beaverton

Paid family leave would have made a big difference for our family. After a somewhat difficult delivery, I was hardly able to walk for almost 2 weeks after our baby was born. I needed my husband not only to help with our daughter, but to help me! He did not have any paid leave through his job. Unfortunately, all the money we had saved so he could've taken time off when she was born had been used up in the month before I delivered, after his work had unexpectedly slowed down tremendously and we had to use all our savings to pay for bills and food. He had to go back to work 3 days after she was born, leaving me in a difficult situation caring for a newborn but barely able to get off the couch.

Babies are born into this country hoping to get lucky and have at least one parent who works for one of the only 13% of American companies who offer any paid leave. That's not fair. All babies deserve time to bond and be cared for by their parents. Fathers need time to bond with their babies. It strengthens families and helps kids grow up to be better citizens. Paid family leave benefits our entire society.

Catherine, Portland

As a child welfare scholar and policy advocate, and as a mom and grandmother, I strongly recommend this. The best investment we could make in a healthy citizenry and reducing more costly negative adult outcomes.

Mary, Newberg

Family medical leave helped me take a leave of absence from my job to help my sister care for our mother. I was able to be away from work for 6 weeks with full pay, and my job was waiting for me when I returned. However, I was a County employee and covered under Federal law. This same privilege should be available to every worker in our state.

Elizabeth, Eugene

I almost didn't have children, due to lack of resources for US citizens. I am a college grad that has been steadily employed full time since my 20s in employment programs, no less, so I have a thorough understanding that the fastest way to poverty in the US is to become pregnant. Fortunately, when I discovered my pregnancy at age 43, the father & I had just accumulated enough resources where we felt like we could meet our sons needs. We almost didn't have kids due to lack of security. The scariest thing about that is that we are, in terms of net worth, in the top 20 percent.