

TENNESSEE 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 Tennessee and take them to heart. Our families are counting on you.**

Linda, Brentwood

I needed to use paid leave to take care of my mother when she was 91 yrs. She had bowel obstruction, an FIB and CHF. She wouldn't have made it without me taking leave and taking care of her.

Virgil, Chattanooga

I was out of work from March 2004 to October 2006 with my mother who was suffering with end stage renal disease. Watching my mother suffering was worse enough let alone the devas-

tating financial loss making it much worse. Workers should not have to suffer financial loss during such a devastating time nor lose their jobs as well. They need protections from financial loss and from losing their jobs!

Cindy, Cordova

Two years ago, my husband was hit by a car while riding his bicycle. He was working in California at the time. I live in Tennessee. Ron was seriously injured; being kept unconscious, on a ventilator, with more wires coming out of him than I have ever seen. I had several weeks of vacation for the year, so I was not worried about paying regular bills, just the medical bills and travel expenses. Two days after I got there, I was informed by my office that gee, they were really sorry, but I was being put on FMLA and I needed to contact the insurance company that handled all that for them and I needed to fill out all these forms so the leave could be approved, oh, and by the way, you aren't being paid and you can't use your vacation time. So much for work being a family and taking care of each other. My husband lived for a 1 1/2 months in the ICU and hospice before the damage to his body became too much to survive. He was awake for maybe 5 hours of that time. Just the room and board for the hospital was \$777,000. What happened was horrible enough without having the additional stress of not being able to pay your bills or know if your job was going to still be there when you were able to come back. Two years down the road, most of the bills are now paid off. Again, I am lucky. People face injury and illness that goes on long past the 2 months I was off work.



**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