

TEXAS 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 Texas and take them to heart. Our families are counting on you.**

Jennifer, College Station

No, I did not get paid family leave. I was fortunate to be able to pay for my leaves when my children were babies from personal savings. I also paid for my health insurance. And while I was away, one of my colleagues tried to persuade my department head to put me into post-tenure review, with the object of forcing me out of my job while I was caring for premature twin newborns. This was done in secret: I only heard about it years later from another colleague who wisely persuaded the then head not to do it. Many mothers do not have my good fortune. What I had was a near miss, and I am still paying for it. As for

the times when my parents were dying, no, I did not get any paid leave to care for them. I did what I could while working full time. And when I was bereaved of them both, I had to pay for a semester's leave out of my savings to regroup and help deal with the situation. Neither was I able to take off time to recover from asthmatic bronchitis: I worked while sick the whole time. It should not be like this in America. Other countries have a heart, and life is better there. These are destructive, counter-productive, cruel practices.

Devine, Austin

When my second child was born three months prematurely, and hospitalized 300 miles from home, I needed the 6 weeks of paid family leave my employer allowed. Beyond that, I had to work around my employment and my travel to see my daughter. It was the longest time of my life.

Carol, Leander

I have COPD and diabetes, and when I have a problem and take a sick day (unpaid) I am threatened with the loss of my job due to my attendance record. What's worse is that my only remaining family member (also my roommate, best friend), my sister, has a terminal illness and it is a sure thing that I will have to take time off to care for her as her situation worsens. So I will be losing my job just as I need it the most. It is very hard to find a job at the age of 61 when you have to haul an oxygen tank everywhere.



**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

Rennes, Missouri City

When my daughter had a baby I was able to take family medical leave. That was vital due to she suffered from preeclampsia, and had to have an emergency cesarean. Family medical leave allowed me to be available to care for her and my grandson for six weeks. If I didn't have it, we would have to hire a caretaker.

Family medical leave is important and necessary for families to help ensure that families loving care and service during their time of need!

Carmen, Lytle

I could have used family leave when my last two children were born. At the time with both children I was working for hourly wage. Thankfully my employers held my position, but the financial struggle was real for 6 weeks.

Alyssa, San Antonio

In April of 2016 my mom went to the emergency room because of a pain in her side. She never complained of pain so this itself was telling. It turns out she had stage four biliary cancer (a rare cancer). I had been at my job for about eight months so I could not request family leave yet. All I had was my vacation or sick time and I wanted to make sure I had those available if my mom ever requested it like if she felt it was time or just felt really bad.

She only requested me stay home from work once and it turns out that was the day she died, a bit short of 5 months after us finding out she had cancer. It would have been nice to have been able to go on a little vacation with her or even just to spend more time with her and not at work.

Traci, Austin

I recently had our first baby, after struggling to conceive for years, at age 39. Because I was in a job that did not provide paid leave, with no policy for holding my role for me while I was out, I was forced to leave the company. I took almost 4 months of unpaid leave, which put strain on my family's finances and tapped into our savings. I also had to start a new job search while simultaneously healing and trying to take care of a newborn.

Because I had unpaid leave, I also had to return to work before I would have preferred to and before my baby was very old. Implementing paid family and maternity leave would have benefited my previous company, as they would have retained me (I was a valued employee), and it would have helped me and my baby to adjust to our life together in a low-stress way.

Michael, Conroe

Loved ones that you devote all of your work to provide for can't get the time off to care for them when they're sick must suffer because you must go to work without getting paid time off. Companies lose productivity when employees don't show up for work.

Paid leave gives them the opportunity to take care of their families and return in a timely manner. In the long run companies can afford to pay for family leave and maintain productive employment.

Mary, San Antonio

I had family leave only for parents, spouses and children. Was able to go to Iowa when my father was dying, but not when my brother was dying. Also, Hospital required that I use all my vacation days for leave before actually getting leave days. It was operated by the State of Texas.

Carol, Austin

I had no paid leave when my daughter was born; had to go back to work when she was 3 weeks old. I was fortunate to have a trusted neighbor and a family member who were happy to take care of her while I was working, but it was tough leaving her with others at such a young age, and trying to keep nursing her after going back to work.

I think all families should have a reasonable amount of time to enjoy the new life in their households before the necessity of earning a living takes them away.

Jennifer, Pflugerville

As a 30-year-old woman considering having a child with my husband, and as an independent contractor and part-time employee who has worked in my field for over 6 years, I am shocked and appalled that I have no access to paid family leave.

Pam, Kingwood

Being there for family members from babies to elderly parents is an American value. Please help make EFFECTIVE family and medical leave available to all.

Joy, Austin

I am a psychotherapist and I treat individuals who seek help with substance abuse and trauma. Affordable health care, including Medicaid, is essential to provide the resources needed to address their needs. Comprehensive paid family and medical leave is desperately needed so that families have the resources to have time off from work to take care of themselves and heal.

Tracie Houston

I am currently 6 months pregnant, the main breadwinner of our family (husband and 4 year old son) and facing this dilemma right now. When I take leave in January, it will be unpaid, leaving me scrambling to figure out how all of our bills will be paid. Not just mothers, but society as a whole needs this act to pass.