

# **#KeepMarching**

**Telephone Town Hall on  
Paid Family and Medical  
Leave & Tactics for  
Passing State Laws**

**MomsRising.org  
MamásConPoder.org**

# AGENDA

## #KeepMarching

### Telephone Town Hall on Paid Family and Medical Leave & Tactics for Passing State Laws

- I. Introductions
- II. We are WINNING - State MOMentum
- III. Setting the stage - The Problems and The Need
  - The Case for Paid Family Fact Sheet
- IV. There IS a solution! - Comprehensive paid family and medical leave insurance that checks all the boxes.
  - Paid Family Leave Image
- V. HOW DO WE WIN? - What can you do?
  - US Paid Leave Stories
  - Moms Meetup ToolKit
  - FAMILY Act Key Facts
  - Paid Sick Day vs Paid Leave Fact Sheet
- VI. Q&A

# THE CASE FOR PAID FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE

Only **14%** of American workers – and only **5%** of low-wage workers – have access to paid leave. Fewer than **40%** of employees have access to personal medical leave through their employer.



**41%** of the workforce isn't eligible for the FMLA because:

- ➡ Their employers have fewer than 50 employees
- ➡ They haven't been working for their employers for at least a year and 1,250 hours

The U.S. guarantees

**0 WEEKS**

of paid family & medical leave



**82%** of voters say they favor a national paid family and medical leave program

## BENEFITS OF PAID FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE

When paid family leave is available, Moms are:\*



**93%** more likely to be at their jobs 9 to 12 months later



**39%** less likely to need public assistance

### DADS ARE:

**2X** as likely to take leave following a child's birth

**More likely** to change diapers, clothe and feed baby at 8-12 months\*\*\*



### BABIES ARE:

**3X** more to start breastfeeding and **2X** more likely at six months

Babies are also more likely to see the doc for a check-up and more likely to get immunized



### CAREGIVERS ARE:

- **More likely** remain in the workforce while providing care for an ill family member
- Likely to show **increased** levels of productivity

## IF YOU LIVED HERE...



The U.S. is one of only seven countries in the world without a national paid family leave policy.



**...YOU WOULD HAVE PAID FAMILY LEAVE BY NOW**

## DOLLARS & CENTS

The lack of access to paid family and medical leave has real financial costs.

**\$500 BILLION**

*In lost economic activity per year*

**\$160 BILLION**

*In lost productivity; twice as much as the cost of absenteeism*

**\$231,800**

*In lifetime wages loss by women & men*

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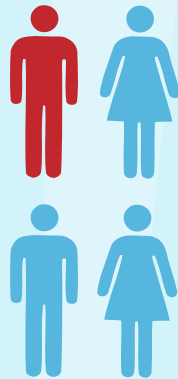
Graphic Information courtesy of the National Partnership for Women & Families, The Department of Labor, the AARP and What to Expect

\* In the year following a child's birth, compared to moms who take no leave at all. \*\* Partners who took more than 12 weeks of leave compared to partners who took less than 12 weeks



## 1 in 4 mothers return to work within 10 days of giving birth

Nearly 12% return less than a week after giving birth



## 1 in 4 retirees

left the workforce earlier  
than planned to care for  
an ill spouse or other  
family member

Family caregivers who leave the workforce to early  
lose on average, nearly \$304,000 in wages and  
benefits over their lifetime.

**Paid family leave programs implemented in states  
nationwide give us a front row seat on why paid  
leave is good for businesses!**



**83%** of mother's who take paid leave  
returned to work for their  
employer, reducing training &  
replacement costs



**87%** showed no increase in costs



Nearly  
**90%**  
of business showed  
an increase in  
productivity and  
employee morale

**NEARLY TWO-THIRDS**  
of workers aged 45-74  
provide care to a spouse,  
parent, or other relative

**Paid leave can reduce  
risk factors for child  
abuse and neglect**



## 60% OF CAREGIVERS ARE FEMALE

The typical caregiver is a 49-year-old  
female, currently caring for a 69-year-old  
female relative who needs care because  
of a long-term physical condition.



**Providing paid family leave to workers  
with caregiving responsibilities can help  
close the gender wage gap.**

**Paid family leave helps to eliminate the  
barriers to breastfeeding to women of color.**



**Enabling optimal breastfeeding would  
prevent 2,619 maternal death and 729  
maternal deaths annually in the U.S.**

**It is time to make paid leave a reality for everyone. Whether it's to care  
for a newborn you swear already smiles, a mom who is ill, or a spouse  
battling cancer, being there for family is what matters. You shouldn't  
have to give up a paycheck, or risk losing your job, to do it.**

**MomsRising.org | MamásConPoder.org**

SOURCES: National Partnership for Women & Families, "Key Findings: 2016 Election Eve/Election Night Survey"; National Partnership "Paid Family and Medical Leave: An Overview"; National Center for Children in Poverty "Building a Competitive Future Right from the Start How Paid Leave Strengthens 21st Century Families"; The Department of Labor, "The Cost of Doing Nothing"; AARP Keeping Up with the Times: Supporting Family Caregivers with Workplace Leave Policies; What to Expect: <http://www.whattoexpect.com/tools/photolist/why-the-u.s.-desperately-needs-a-national-paid-family-and-medical-leave-program.aspx>; AARP, "Understanding the Impact of Family Caregiving on Work"; Caregiving in the US - AARP & National Alliance for Caregiving; The Wage Gap: The Who, How, Why, and What To Do - National Women's Law Center; Disparities in Breastfeeding: Impact on Maternal and Child Health Outcomes and Costs. The Journal of Pediatrics, 2016; Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: A Technical Package for Policy, Norm, and Programmatic Activities, Centers from Disease Control, 2016

# PAID FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE

## A GOOD PAID LEAVE POLICY MEANS MORE THAN MATERNITY



### **ACCESSIBLE**

Is Accessible to ALL working people



### **INCLUSIVE**

Is Inclusive when it comes to defining “family”



### **NO ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES**

Allows working people to take leave without facing adverse employment consequences



### **AFFORDABLE**

Affordable, cost-effective and sustainable for workers, employers, and taxpayers.



### **MEANINGFUL LENGTH**

Leave of at least 12 weeks, covers the full range of personal medical and family caregiver needs established in FMLA



### **FUNDED**

Is affordable and cost-effective for workers, employers/businesses and the government. The program would be funded responsibly by small employee and employer payroll contributions of two tenths of 1 percent each (two cents per \$10 in wages), or less than \$1.50 per week for a typical worker.

Whether it's to care for a newborn you swear already smiles, a mom who is ill, or a spouse battling cancer, being there for family is what matters. You shouldn't have to give up a paycheck to do it. It's time for paid family leave.

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# AMERICAN FAMILIES NEED PAID FAMILY LEAVE

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is an important workplace protection, but unfortunately, it does not reflect the many dimensions of American families and lives. FMLA does not cover 40% of the work-force and it guarantees only unpaid leave, which millions cannot afford to take - putting their families at risk for sinking into poverty. In fact, across the country only 14% of workers receive paid leave through their employers. [1]

American families need a paid family and medical leave policy that checks ALL the boxes: It needs to be ACCESSIBLE to all workers, offer a MEANINGFUL length of leave, be AFFORDABLE for workers, employers and the government, be INCLUSIVE in defining family and offer job PROTECTION.

These stories represent some of the experiences people have with paid leave in your state and showcase the need for us to expand FMLA and implement a paid family and medical leave program. **\*Please read the following stories from across the country and take them to heart. Our families are counting on you.**

## *Amy, Delaware*

I had a baby girl two years ago. As a public school teacher, I was not given paid maternity leave. My husband and I began saving for my maternity leave the minute we found out we were expecting a child. I had to use every one of the personal days that I had intentionally been saving throughout my previous five years of employment.

I was able to use three weeks of short-term disability, which allowed me to receive 75% of my pay during this time. After this ran out, I used the rest of my saved sick days. After my sick days ran out, I was able to use FMLA in order to prolong my stay at home with my baby. During these three months, I received no pay. Taking this time to be the best parent I can be cost my family a great deal of sacrifice. Being a brand new parent is challenging enough, but worrying about being able to pay the bills on top of it is even worse.

## *Tammy, West Virginia*

After my first child was born I had to return to work in 4 weeks as that was all the paid time that I had accumulated at my job. I was trying to breastfeed and unable to pump at work and how I did not develop mastitis amazes me now. In other developed countries in Europe moms are given paid maternity leave of sometimes up to a year after a birth. They are paid to stay at home and care for their babies which allows them to breastfeed their babies unhindered. Being a former working mother I know firsthand how hard it is to try and maintain your milk supply when working. Another point no need for fancy day care centers in those countries as moms are caring for their own infants in their own homes. What a cost savings, and moms are not stressed out from having to work, trying to maintain their family unit and care for young children. I bet the level of postpartum depression in moms is lower also, and their breastfeeding rates are anywhere from 80-90%. Breastfeeding is such a benefit to moms and babies and research is finding more and more benefits all the time. It is so important the Koran mandates moms to nurse babies for two years. I learned long ago in nursing school, mother the mother so she can mother the new baby. Our moms are told return to work in 6 weeks and to bad your stressed out, that's life.

## *Jennifer, Montana*

I have two beautiful children. I had one week off after my son was born and I had 1 day off after my daughter was born or I would have lost my job. I know that having paid time off is essential. I also had to work the day my Father died in order to keep my employment.



**41%** of the workforce isn't eligible for the FMLA because:

- ➡ Their employers have fewer than 50 employees
- ➡ They haven't been working for their employers for at least a year and 1,250 hours

SOURCE: [1] "The Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act," National Partnership

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](http://www.MomsRising.org)

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### **Carmen, Hawaii**

I worked all the way up until one week before my due date. When my son was born, I used up all the sick and vacation days I had saved, which only totaled 3 weeks. Then I was on unpaid leave - and the 'lucky' part for me was that my job let me take 3 months off and return to the same position. Health insurance was a major problem, since after the birth, I had coverage for only another 3 weeks- the time I was getting paid. So the standard 6 week check up, plus check ups for my son were not covered. We paid out of pocket for those, depleting our savings entirely. When I did return to work, I returned with no savings cushion, no time to take off for sickness or doctor appointments. And this, my friends tell me, makes me lucky.

### **Jennifer, North Dakota**

I had my son in February 2010. I did not have the option of paid maternity leave, but I was able to combine my sick and annual leave. That amounted to 9 weeks off, I also took 3 weeks of leave without pay. I split that time off with some part-time hours. So my son was only 2 months old when I went back to work. Taking 3 weeks off without pay put a huge burden on my family. My husband and I don't make a lot of money. My husband was allowed to take 2 weeks off, but he had to use his sick and annual leave as well. I am still nursing my son, but at times it has been a struggle. Finding the time and place to pump at work is hard, but it is worth it. Having more (or any!) paid maternity leave would have made a huge difference in our lives. My husband and I would love to have more children, but we will have to wait until I can accrue enough sick and annual leave again. I do realize that there are people out there that have it far worse than us, but it's time the US got with the program. We are supposed to be a country that leads the world, but we cannot take care of our own families!

### **Rhonda, New Hampshire**

My story has a happy ending, despite the fact that FMLA does not apply to any business that employs less than 50 people. My employer is a family man who owns his business. Even though he was under no obligation to offer me Maternity Leave, he gave me the full 12 weeks, unpaid but with a guarantee that my job would be in place when and if I wished to return. For that and for many other things I will be forever grateful. I was able to bond and establish a strong breastfeeding relationship with my baby due to the time I was allowed. We promote our country to be one of the most progressive nations, yet we are still in the dark ages when it comes to the most important asset we have – our families.

Only **14%** of American workers – and only **5%** of low-wage workers – have access to paid leave. Fewer than **40%** of employees have access to personal medical leave through their employer.



### **Jamee, Florida**

When I was on maternity leave with my first child, despite my husband and I saving money throughout my pregnancy, I had to return to work after 8 weeks as we had only \$25 remaining in our bank accounts - total. We had planned as much as we could but my husband's work was unexpected shut down for 3 months for construction issues a month and a half before my daughter was born. He managed to find some part time, temporary work to help with expenses, but we still went through our entire savings before I was forced to return earlier than we would have liked. I was a nervous wreck trying to budget childcare in with the added expenses of having a newborn AND struggling to pay for bills. After learning that America was one of the few countries that doesn't offer any form of paid maternity leave I was disgusted. We can do better!

### **Kindell, Virginia**

I was hired as a waitress when I was about 3 months pregnant. As I was about to begin training for management my boss decided I should take my unpaid leave. I was a week away from my due date. Two days before my due date I received a phone call saying they needed help and were very shorthanded, so I went in. The next morning I delivered a beautiful baby boy. When he was just 3 weeks old, I received a phone call saying if I did not come into work tomorrow I could kiss my promotion good bye. I went in the next day, after only 3 weeks leave, still in pain.

### **Julie, Sunrise**

I was back at work within 3 weeks of having my first baby. I was supposed to have 4 weeks paid off time. I had worked at that company (small commercial print shop) for almost 8 years and they claimed that they did not have the money to pay me for any more than 2 weeks paid. My husband's job wasn't any better to help out with finances. I had to go to work to be able to help pay our bills, and the first few months was the hardest for me to do that... being up most of the night for the baby, having to run around finding someone to watch her while I worked, and sometimes I had to bring her to work with me but that was not easy for me to focus on my work.) It was very hard on my family, having to struggle with getting some sleep and focusing on baby, work & household. I think all mothers should have at least 6 weeks paid time, and be able to be there for their baby at all times and not to have to worry about bills and their jobs.

### **Georganne, Georgia**

I experienced a hard time when I had a baby in 2007. I was a part-time worker at a University and unfortunately I had to go without pay for 6 weeks during my maternity leave. My husband and I had to defer car payments and rearrange several bills to make sure I could eat properly and pay bills. It took months after my leave once I returned to work to catch up bills, not including the medical bill of having my daughter. It was a stressful time when it should be more enjoyable. I couldn't imagine what it will be like in the future when I have another child. Many of my friends have multiple children in the home and something always go lacking.

# **moms** **toolkit**

## **Paid Family and Medical Leave Toolkit**

Thank you for organizing a MomsMeetup gathering in your community... now it's time for the fun part – getting everything ready. We're building MOMentum on paid family and medical leave – and we need YOU! Moms across the country are organizing in FORCE and together we can push for the strong paid family and medical leave program that our families, businesses, and economy need!

Will you join us? Together, our voices are powerful and there is nothing we can't do.

We've provided a few resources to help you with a fun and engaging gathering. If you have additional questions, email the MomsRising team at [Tina@MomsRising.org](mailto:Tina@MomsRising.org).

### **PLANNING YOUR MOMS MEETUP**

#### **1. Pick a Time & Location**

Most importantly, pick a time and location that will keep your stress level low. Some people love to host at their home, others can't imagine their house would ever be clean long enough to have others over.

Some location options outside your home that you might consider include:

**Library meeting room**

**Community center**

**Religious facility**

**Coffee shop/Café**

**Bar/Lounge**

**Business office**

**Restaurant**

**Your House**

**Park/Playground**

**School cafeteria**

#### **2. Sign Up**

If you haven't already, let us know you are organizing a gathering by signing up as a host. Just email us at: [tina@momsrising.org](mailto:tina@momsrising.org).

#### **3. Invite Others**

Friends, family, parents of kids in your children's classes or sports teams, neighbors, book groups, and more. You can invite anyone who you think may be interested!

If you want to make your party public, we can help spread the word to members of the MomsRising community in your area. Drop us a line at [tina@momsrising.org](mailto:tina@momsrising.org) for help.



## SUGGESTED MEETUP ACTIVITIES

The most satisfying meetup is one where the host (you!) and participants feel welcomed and inspired by the topic and conversation. In good news, creating a welcoming, safe environment for people to share their concerns, values and questions is totally possible and we have some great tips & activities to do this below.

To support your meetup planning, we have outlined some optional MomsMeetup activities that you can mix and match to make the most effective gathering for your group size, the time you have and the attendees' familiarity with the topic. For example, doing the Welcome exercise, discussing personal experiences around paid leave and leading the closing exercise would be the right mix for a gathering that was about an hour. A long gathering could include more activities. The choice is yours!

### WELCOME

(Recommended for all MomsMeetups) – 10 minutes

- Welcome guests and share a few personal thoughts about why you are hosting
- Invite each person to introduce themselves and share why they are interested in the topic
- Briefly share the activities for the gathering

### OUR EXPERIENCES

(Recommended agenda activity) – 20 minutes

Many people care deeply about paid family and medical leave because they, or someone they know, has had a personal experience of using it – or of needing it but not having it. Reflecting on our own personal experiences with this issue can be a powerful way to begin the issue discussion.

***Important Note:** When we say paid “family” leave in this toolkit, we mean paid leave for moms AND/OR dads to use when a new child arrives, either through birth or adoption. Family leave also means time away to care for a seriously ill family member, like when an aging parent is diagnosed with a chronic illness or a spouse is diagnosed with cancer. And when we say “medical” leave, we mean when people need to time away from work to care for a serious personal medical crisis.*

To have this conversation, we'd recommend you:

- Ask the group: "Have you, or anyone you know, had an experience with or without paid family and medical leave? This could be a positive experience or a negative experience. What happened in your life?"
- For a follow up questions, you can ask: "Do you have paid family/medical leave through your employer? Have you ever taken it? Or, if not, how did you do it?"
  - If so, studies show that when businesses have paid family leave, it increases their retention of valued employees, saving the business funds in recruitment and retraining. Did you see that play out in your workplace?
  - Did having paid family medical leave help you get back to your job?
  - Have you ever taken paid family/medical leave?
- » Have you ever taken paid family/medical leave?
  - If so, did having paid family leave help you eventually get back to your job? (Studies show that access to paid family leave after a new baby arrives significantly increases the number of moms who are able to be in the labor force a year after giving birth)
- » Have you ever taken unpaid or partially paid family/medical leave? Why or why not?
- The U.S. is the only industrialized nation in the world without paid family leave, and studies show the lack of this policy hurts infant and maternal health, business productivity and retention, and family economic security. Given that data, do you think we should move forward to advance it here?

# moms **MEETUP** paid leave toolkit

## BABIES & MORE

### Brainstorm Paid Family & Medical Leave Uses! (Optional activity) – 10 minutes

One of the major misconceptions about paid family and medical leave is that it's only about supporting new parents (and mostly birthmothers) when a new baby arrives in a family either through childbirth or adoption. This is a big deal because 82% of women have children by the time they're 44 years old. But paid family/medical leave covers more than just the arrival of babies. It also covers your own serious illness, or the serious illness of a close family member. The goal of this conversation is to have guests think of all of the ways that paid family & medical leave can support their families through many instances. For example, you might need paid family leave to help your own parents deal with a serious medical condition, or even end-of-life care, or you may need paid family leave for yourself to recover from a serious illness.

#### To have this conversation:

- Hand out post-it notes or small pieces of blank paper and pens/pencils to each guest
- Give them 3-4 minutes to think silently to themselves (and record) all of the ways their family might need to use paid leave in the next 10 years
- Spend 5 minutes having guests share their responses as they feel comfortable

### PAID FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE

#### A GOOD PAID LEAVE POLICY MEANS MORE THAN MATERNITY

-  **ACCESSIBLE**  
Is Accessible to ALL working people
-  **INCLUSIVE**  
Is Inclusive when it comes to defining "family"
-  **NO ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES**  
Allows working people to take leave without facing adverse employment consequences
-  **AFFORDABLE**  
Affordable, cost-effective and sustainable for workers, employers, and taxpayers.
-  **MEANINGFUL LENGTH**  
Leave of at least 12 weeks, covers the full range of personal medical and family caregiver needs established in FMLA
-  **FUNDED**  
Is affordable and cost-effective for workers, employers/businesses and the government. The program would be funded responsibly by small employee and employer payroll contributions of two tenths of 1 percent each (two cents per \$10 in wages), or less than \$1.50 per week for a typical worker.

Whether it's to care for a newborn you swear already smiles, a mom who is ill, or a spouse battling cancer, being there for family is what matters. You shouldn't have to give up a paycheck to do it. It's time for paid family leave.

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## WHAT, WHAT?!

### Background information on the US & The Rest of the World on Paid Leave

#### (Recommended activity) – 30 minutes

It's becoming more widely known that the U.S. is far outside of the norm in the developing world in not having paid family leave policies. In fact, we're the ONLY industrialized nation in the world without this policy for new moms. This fact powerfully underscores the need for immediate action and how common sense and practical paid leave policies are for families, businesses, and our economy. The good news that momentum for paid family leave is growing in the United States. While three states have paid family leave insurance programs, for the vast majority of working people whether or not they are able to access paid family leave depends entirely on where they work. This means that only 14% of people, and only 5% of low wage workers, have access to paid family leave after a new baby arrives.

Only **14%** of American workers – and only **5%** of low-wage workers – have access to paid leave. Fewer than **40%** of employees have access to personal medical leave through their employer.



# moms **MEETUP** paid leave toolkit

## CONTINUED: WHAT, WHAT?!

Further, although many major corporations have made news in the last year or so for expanding their paid leave policies, not all employees will necessarily have the same access to paid leave, creating a “haves” and “have-nots” scenario wherein the most economically vulnerable amongst us are the least likely to have access to paid family leave.

You shouldn’t have to win the “boss lottery” to have access to coverage. A national, or state, paid family leave policy that covers everyone simplifies this policy for businesses to implement, and also lowers business costs because it’s a social insurance program funded through paycheck deductions, and it also lifts families.

Other countries have passed this policy because it’s a win-win-win for families, businesses, and the economy. In fact studies show that with paid leave after a new baby arrives there is a 25% decrease in infant mortality, moms are 40% less likely to need food stamps and longer-term government support (saving taxpayer dollars overall), businesses save funds in recruitment and retention; and our economy is boosted because moms are more likely to be in the labor force a year after giving birth.

The goal of this conversation is to educate your guests about how paid family leave lifts businesses and the economy; as well as where the U.S. stands on paid family leave policies in the global context and on a domestic front too.

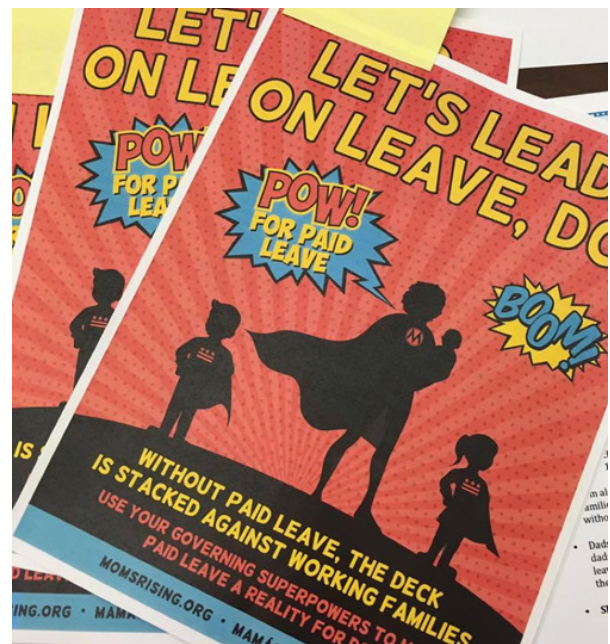
### To have this conversation, we’d recommend:

- Watch this 12-minute, wry, informative clip from a recent “This Last Week with John Oliver,” show about the current status of paid family leave policies in the US: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIhKAQX5izw>
- As a group, check out the interactive tool, “The Family Leave Shuffle” that ranks countries worldwide on their leave policies: <http://www.raisingofamerica.org/family-leave>
- Together, discuss the reactions to the clip, including:
  - What information surprised you the most?
  - What is your reaction to hearing where the U.S. stands on this issue?
  - What ways do you think we can all get the word out that access to paid family leave boosts families, businesses, and the economy?
  - What do you think stands in our way of making change?

**Paid family leave helps to eliminate the barriers to breastfeeding to women of color.**



**Enabling optimal breastfeeding would prevent 2,619 maternal death and 729 maternal deaths annually in the U.S.**



## **PAID FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE 101**

**(Optional activity) – 20 minutes**

The need for paid family and medical leave is logical, but current and prospective laws about leave can be confusing. For example, many people confuse the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) protections with paid family leave and assume they have stronger financial and job protections in place than they do!

The goal of this conversation is to help your guests understand what protections are already in place in their state and our country, and which are not.

**To have this conversation, we recommend:**

- As a group, you this helpful FMLA fact sheet produced by A Better Balance:  
[http://www.abetterbalance.org/web/images/stories/Documents/ForFamilies/ABB\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_-\\_Family\\_and\\_Medical\\_Leave\\_Act.pdf](http://www.abetterbalance.org/web/images/stories/Documents/ForFamilies/ABB_Fact_Sheet_-_Family_and_Medical_Leave_Act.pdf)
- As a group, review this fact sheet about paid leave produced by the National Partnership for Women & Families:  
<http://www.nationalpartnership.org/issues/work-family/paid-leave-fact-sheets.html>
- Check out where your state stands currently on paid leave policies:  
[http://b.fastcompany.net/multisite\\_files/fastcompany/imagecache/-/inline/2016/02/3056957-inline-i-2-final-fmla-usamaps.png](http://b.fastcompany.net/multisite_files/fastcompany/imagecache/-/inline/2016/02/3056957-inline-i-2-final-fmla-usamaps.png)
- Together, discuss the reactions to the information, including:
  - Are your rights different than what you thought they were? If so, how?
  - What protections – or lack of protections – surprise you?
  - Have you learned about your state workplace protections? If so, where?

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

**(Recommended for all meetups) – 20 minutes**

When people learn about the dramatically limited access to paid family leave protections, they usually want to support immediate change! The goal of this conversation is to inform your guests what they can do to move make paid family and medical leave a reality for families in the U.S.

To do this, we recommend inviting your guests to do the following to help educate the media, leaders and the public that paid family leave is about more than just numbers on paper. The experiences of families help put a human face on the issues and have a BIG impact in conversations with decision makers. Encourage your guests to submit their stories on how having (or not having) paid family leave impacted their family:

[http://action.momsrising.org/survey/paidfamilyleave\\_stories/](http://action.momsrising.org/survey/paidfamilyleave_stories/)



## CRAFT ACTIVITY FOR PARENTS & KIDS

### (Optional activity)

Many hosts prefer to offer a craft activity for adults, children or both during the gathering. Some hosts like to have the crafts going during the conversation and others like to set up the crafting for a post-discussion activity - it's your choice.

One of our favorite and easy crafting activity is decorating baby onesies (infant t-shirt suits!) with messages and artwork. We have an example below! You can either send the onesies to MomsRising for us to display for you, you can keep them as momentos of your gathering or for future actions together.

Messages on onesies can be anything you want - "My parents wanted to be with me when I was this small, not at work" or "Paid leave meant I got breastmilk for longer!" or "Parents in the US need paid leave now!"

Here's what you'll need for onesie making:

- Dedicated table/s, preferably with covering to protect surfaces
- Baby onesies - either new from the store or from used clothing stores (or you can encourage your guests to bring any old, used onesies); all sizes and colors work
- Puffy paints of different colors (note: puffy painted onesies take longer to dry)
- Fabric markers
- Notions for decorations - stick on shapes, stickers, felt, etc.
- Glue (not the stick glue kind)

These items (except for the onesies) are easy to find at a crafts store.



# **moms** **paid leave toolkit**

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## **CLOSING**

**(Recommended for all MomsMeetups) – 15 minutes**

- Thank everyone for coming
  - Ask everyone what stood out for them in the gathering in a round robin – an inspiration, a new learning, new connections, a plan of action, etc.
  - Urge everyone to join MomsRising by texting MOMS to the number 747646 on their cellphones before leaving!
  - Take a group picture!
  - Send your group picture to us via Tina@MomsRising.org post it directly to:  
[www.facebook.com/momsrising.org](http://www.facebook.com/momsrising.org)
  - THANK YOU!!
- 

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

**Department of Labor's FAQ document regarding the FMLA:**

<http://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/fmla-faqs.htm>

**A Better Balance fact sheet on FMLA & LGBTQ families:**

<http://www.abetterbalance.org/web/images/stories/Documents/FMLA-LGBT.pdf>

**Advancing a Family Friendly America: How Family Friendly Is Your State?:**

<http://www.nationalpartnership.org/issues/work-family/family-friendly-america/family-friendly-america-map.html>

**Work & Family Policy Database:**

<http://www.nationalpartnership.org/issues/work-family/work-family-policy-database/>



# FAMILY ACT KEY FACTS

## FAMILY ACT

- Only **14%** of American workers – and only **5%** of low-wage workers – have access to paid leave. Fewer than **40%** of employees have access to personal medical leave through their employer.
- **1 in 4 mothers** return to work within 10 days of giving birth.
- **1 in 4 retirees** leave the workforce earlier than planned to care for an ill spouse or other family member.
- **82%** of voters say they favor a national paid family and medical leave program.

**American workers need the FAMILY Act. It is a national paid family and medical leave policy that checks ALL the boxes. The FAMILY Act:**

- Is **accessible** to ALL working people
- Offers **meaningful length of leave** – at least 12 weeks & covers the full range of personal medical and family caregiver needs established in the Family and Medical Leave Act
- Is **affordable and cost-effective** for workers, employers/businesses and the government. The program would be funded responsibly by small employee and employer payroll contributions of two tenths of 1 percent each (two cents per \$10 in wages), or less than \$1.50 per week for a typical worker.
- Is **inclusive** when it comes to defining “family”; and
- And is **funded** through an insurance-style program that lifts the financial burden off individual businesses and has proven effective at the state level.

## PAID SICK DAYS AND PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

### HOW THEY'RE DIFFERENT AND WHY WE NEED BOTH

#### FEDERAL PAID SICK DAYS LEGISLATION

##### *The Healthy Families Act*

- To stay home and recover from a short-term illness, like the common cold.
- Access preventive medical care.
- Care for a sick child or family member.
- Attend school meetings related to a child's health condition or disability.
- Allows survivors of domestic violence, stalking, or sexual assault to use paid sick time to recover or seek assistance related to an incident.

#### FEDERAL PAID FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE LEGISLATION

##### *The FAMILY Act*

- To address a serious personal health condition, like cancer that requires long-term care
- Care for a family member with a serious health condition.
- Care for a newborn, newly-adopted child or newly-placed foster child.
- The length of leave is adequate to cover the full range of personal medical and family caregiving needs established in the Family and Medical Leave Act. (FMLA)

### What is The Healthy Families Act?

The Healthy Families Act would set a national paid sick days standard for so that working families would no longer have to make impossible choices between caring for their health and keeping a paycheck or job when a short-term illness strikes. Right now, 41 million workers, including HALF of all working moms, can't earn a single paid sick day to stay home when they come down with the flu — or need to care for a sick child. [1]

This legislation would allow workers in businesses with 15 or more employees to earn up to seven paid sick days each year to be used to recover from their own illnesses, access preventive care, provide care to a sick family member, or attend school meetings related to a child's health condition or disability. Workers would earn a minimum of one hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours worked, up to 56 hours (seven days) per year, unless the employer selects a higher limit.

Workers in businesses with fewer than 15 employees would earn up to seven job-protected unpaid sick days each year to be used for the same reasons, unless their employers choose to offer paid sick days.

The Healthy Families Act would also allow workers who are survivors of domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault to use their paid sick days to recover or seek assistance related to an incident.

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## What is The FAMILY Act?

The FAMILY Act is a robust paid family & medical leave policy that meets the variety of long-term caregiving needs that American workers face. Whether it's to care for a newborn, a mom who is ill, or a spouse battling cancer, the FAMILY Act ensures that you won't have to give up a paycheck to care for family.

Only 14% of workers in the United States have access to paid family leave through their employers, and fewer than 40% have access to personal medical leave through employer The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) has kept millions of people from losing their jobs when serious medical needs arise, but it only covers 60% of the workforce, and it guarantees only unpaid leave, which millions cannot afford to take. [2]

Without access to paid family and medical leave, some families end up cobbling together vacation time and sick days and then cross their fingers that nothing goes wrong. Many families struggle to make ends to when they have to take unpaid leave and others cannot afford to take any unpaid time at all. This is why 1 in 4 new moms is back at work just two weeks after having a baby. [3] And 1 in 4 retirees leave the workforce earlier than planned to care for an ill spouse or other family member. [4]

## Why Do We Need Both Policies?

The Healthy Families Act and The FAMILY Act are complementary policies that cover a spectrum of health and caregiving events that commonly arise at some point in a working person's life. They work in tandem to boost family economic security, the national economy, and businesses.

Whether it's a two-day cold, parental leave, or lengthy cancer treatment, being there for family and being able to make a full recovery is what matters – and nobody should have to lose a paycheck or their livelihood to do it.

Having to take unpaid leave to care for a new baby is a leading cause of poverty spells in the United States and just 3.5 days of missed work is equivalent to an entire month of groceries for an average family without paid sick days. [5] This has serious consequences for our national economy and family economic security across the board.

Oftentimes, working parents who are able to earn paid sick days on the job are forced to cobble together the few paid sick days they have to create a very short paid period of parental leave. This is a bandaid – and a weak one at that – for our nation's lack of access to paid family leave. It means that when parents return to work after using their paid sick days for parental leave, they've exhausted their paid sick time and aren't able to use it for the daycare-borne illnesses that are bound to hit. In fact, in the first two years of life alone, most children have eight to 10 colds. The Healthy Families Act and The FAMILY Act are designed to cover different circumstances and working families need both!

[1] Quick Facts – Paid Sick Days, National Partnership for Women & Families, <http://www.paidicksdays.org/research-resources/quick-facts.html>

[2] Paid Leave, National Partnership for Women & Families, <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/issues/work-family/paid-leave.html>

[3] "The Real War on Families: Why the U.S. Needs Paid Leave Now," In These Times, <http://inthesetimes.com/article/18151/the-real-war-on-families>

[4] Keeping Up with the Times: Supporting Family Caregivers with Workplace Leave Policies, AARP Public Policy Institute [http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/public\\_policy\\_institute/lrc/2013/fmla-insight-keeping-up-with-time-AARP-ppi-ltc.pdf](http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/public_policy_institute/lrc/2013/fmla-insight-keeping-up-with-time-AARP-ppi-ltc.pdf)

[5] The Need for Paid Sick Days, The Economic Policy Institute, [http://www.epi.org/publication/the\\_need\\_for\\_paid\\_sick\\_days/](http://www.epi.org/publication/the_need_for_paid_sick_days/)