



March 15, 2011

The Honorable Sandré Swanson
State Capitol, Room 6012
Sacramento, CA 94249-0016

VIA FACSIMILE to (916) 319-2116

RE: AB 59 Family and Medical Leave Legislation – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Swanson:

Thank you for introducing AB 59 in the California Assembly. The California Women's Law Center ("CWLC") supports AB 59 because it allows workers to take job-protected leave to care for seriously ill adult children, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, and parents-in-law. Since its founding in 1989, CWLC has worked to ensure that life opportunities for women and girls are free from unjust social, economic, and political constraints. It is the first law center in California solely dedicated to addressing the comprehensive and unique legal needs of women and girls.

The California Family Rights Act (CFRA) guarantees workers the critical right to take time off from work to care for their own or a family member's serious health condition. Unfortunately, because of an overly narrow definition of family, CFRA excludes many caretakers - disproportionately women - from the ability to provide care for their loved ones.

According to the Department of Labor, about 60% of women are active members of the workforce, accounting for about 47% of the total workforce. Despite this fact, women also make up approximately 75% of caregivers nationwide. Women further comprise 59% of low-wage workers. This means that a significant number of working women, especially women with low-wage jobs, frequently have to choose between being paid or caring for a sick loved one.

Broadening the CFRA's definition of "family" will ensure women don't have to struggle to remain in the workforce and care for ill relatives. We support AB 59 because it recognizes the importance of family caregiving, and helps workers caring for family members balance the demands of work and family. We thank you for your important work in strengthening protections for working families.

We urge all legislators to join you in supporting AB 59.

Sincerely,

Katie Buckland, Executive Director

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