



March 15, 2011

The Honorable Mariko Yamada
State Capitol, Room 5160
Sacramento, CA 94249

VIA FACSIMILE to (916) 319-2108

RE: AB 804 Paid Family Leave Legislation – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Yamada:

Thank you for introducing AB 804 in the California Assembly. The California Women’s Law Center (“CWLC”) wholeheartedly supports AB 804 because it allows workers to receive partial wage replacement when they must miss work to care for seriously ill 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.

California’s Paid Family Leave (PFL) program is a landmark program and the first of its kind in the nation. The program is funded entirely by worker contributions and provides up to six weeks of partial wage replacement to workers on leave to bond with a new child or care for a seriously ill family member. Unfortunately, many workers caring for a seriously ill family member lack access to the program because of the program’s overly narrow definition of family.

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 compared to men, a vastly disproportionate number of working women, especially women with low-wage jobs, frequently have to choose between being paid or caring for a sick relative. More and more women struggle to stay in the workforce and also care for ill loved ones.

No one should have to choose between a paycheck and a sick family member. By expanding the PFL program to include caregiving for seriously ill siblings, grandparents, grandchildren and parents-in-law, California workers – particularly working women - will have the opportunity to care for close family members without jeopardizing their economic well-being.

We urge all legislators to join you in supporting AB 804.

Sincerely,

Katie Buckland, Executive Director

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