

June 28, 2017

Dear Members of Congress:

On behalf of the more than 340 undersigned organizations and the tens of millions of working families we represent, we urge you to stand with working families across the nation by committing to **support a strong, responsible national paid family and medical leave policy and reject harmful alternatives.**

The United States needs a national paid family and medical leave plan to provide essential support and create opportunity for all working people and families, to help ensure that people can take the time they need to address serious health issues, to promote a more level playing field for businesses of all sizes and to strengthen our national economy.

Policy details matter tremendously. Disparities in access to leave, changing demographics and the realities working families face today require that any meaningful national plan be comprehensive and inclusive. Responsible governance requires that any plan be affordable, cost-effective and sustainably funded with new revenue, not with cuts to existing programs. Any plan that fails to meet these tests – and especially one that does so in the context of a budget proposal that would do irreparable damage to the health, nutrition, income stability and well-being of millions of people across the country – is unacceptable. Paid leave in name only will serve no one.

The paid parental leave proposal included in the Trump administration's FY 2018 budget is unacceptable, both on its face and in the context of a devastatingly draconian budget.

The Trump budget proposes to require states to provide six weeks of paid leave to parents caring for newborn or newly adopted children. The proposal is inadequate and unworkable for the following reasons:

- It excludes more than 75 percent of people in this country who take family or medical leave not to care for new babies or newly adopted children, but to care for family members with serious illnesses, injuries or disabilities or for their own serious health issue.¹
- It would put severe stress on an already fragile unemployment insurance (UI) program, threaten to impose further cuts in existing UI benefits or higher taxes on employers to make UI funds more solvent, and could seriously undermine access to state UI benefits when the next recession hits.
- It would likely incorporate unacceptably restrictive UI eligibility rules and unacceptably low UI benefit levels, which would make leave inaccessible or unaffordable for many workers who need time to care, rather than setting inclusive and meaningful national baselines.
- It provides just six weeks of leave, rather than the 12-week minimum that the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) established for unpaid leave more than 24 years ago; a new national program should not diminish an existing national standard.

Establishing a real national paid family and medical leave standard is crucial. Today, just 14 percent of the workforce in the United States has access to paid family leave through an employer, and less than 40 percent has access to personal medical leave through an employer's temporary disability insurance program.² Access rates for workers in lower-wage jobs are much lower, and recent private sector advances are disproportionately concentrated in higher-skill industries and among higher-paid employees. The benefits of paid family and medical leave for workforce attachment, economic stability and individual, family, and public health are well-documented.

It is well past time for the United States to adopt a nationwide paid family and medical leave standard, and not just any plan will do. A strong, responsible paid leave policy must:

- **Apply to everyone on a nationwide basis**, no matter where people live, where they work or what job they hold.
- **Include all of the well-established reasons people need paid leave** – to care for new children or seriously ill or injured family members including aging loved ones, to address their own serious health condition, or to address military care needs.
- **Offer substantial benefits** so that lower- and middle-wage workers can afford to take the paid family and medical leave available to them.
- **Provide a reasonable duration of leave** that matches or exceeds the 12-week precedent established by the FMLA, the nation's unpaid leave law.
- **Protect workers** from adverse employment consequences for using paid leave.
- **Be sustainably and responsibly funded**, without making unacceptable and harmful cuts or adding barriers to access to other essential programs, including but not limited to Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), UI or other programs that serve millions of people across the country.

Successful state programs have shown what works. Paid family and medical leave insurance programs have existed in California since 2004, New Jersey since 2009 and Rhode Island since 2014. Strong new programs will take effect in New York in 2018 and in the District of Columbia in 2020. Analyses of California's law show that both employers and employees benefit from the program.³ In New Jersey, the program costs have been lower than expected and public attitudes toward the program are favorable.⁴ Early research on Rhode Island's program found positive effects for new parents, and a majority of small- and medium-sized employers were in favor of the program one year after it took effect.⁵ California, New Jersey and Rhode Island have all had financially sound programs and are all exploring ways to make them more accessible.

National paid family and medical leave insurance has broad support from voters across party lines. Supermajorities of voters across party lines support a comprehensive, 12-week national paid family and medical leave law, including 66 percent of Republicans, 77 percent of independents, and 93 percent of Democrats. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of voters say they would "strongly favor" such a law.⁶

Seven in 10 small business owners support national paid family and medical leave

insurance. A national, scientific survey found that 70 percent of small business owners and operators support legislation to establish a national paid family and medical leave insurance program funded by modest contributions from both employees and employers.⁷ Small business owners report that this paid leave policy would help level the playing field with large corporations, improve worker retention, productivity and morale, and protect small business owners' economic security in the event of an accident or medical emergency.⁸

Americans want and need paid leave for elder care, self-care and family members with

serious health conditions. The majority of parents, adult children and spouses who provide care for ill family members or children with disabilities also having paying jobs; half of those who do have paying jobs are working full time in addition to their caregiving responsibilities.⁹ The majority of military caregivers – and more than three-quarters of caregivers for post-9/11 wounded warriors – are also in the labor force.¹⁰ Additionally, the number of aging adults who need care will only continue to increase. By 2060, the number of people at or above retirement age in the United States is expected to double.¹¹

America's lack of paid family and medical leave has serious costs – for women's workforce advancement and income, working people's economic and retirement security, the health and well-being of children and older adults who need care, and business retention and recruitment. It also strains taxpayer-funded safety net programs and deprives the nation of new tax revenue that would come from women's improved wages and the greater productivity that would come from increases in women's workforce participation.

It is well past time to truly support working people and families with a strong national paid family and medical leave policy.

We urge you to support strong, inclusive national paid family and medical leave legislation and reject inadequate proposals that would fail to meet the needs of the nation's workforce, families or businesses – and that would do more harm than good.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

1,000 Days

9to5, National Association of Working Women

A Better Balance

ACRIA

African American Ministers In Action (AAMIA)

Amalgamated Bank

American Academy of Nursing

American Civil Liberties Union

American Family Voices

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

American Psychological Association

American Public Health Association

American Sustainable Business Council

Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)
The Arc of the United States
Asset Building Strategies
Association of Flight Attendants
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Bend the Arc Jewish Action
Black Women's Roundtable
Caring Across Generations
Center for American Progress
Center for Global Policy Solutions
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center for Medicare Advocacy
Center for Popular Democracy
Center for Southeast Asians
ChangeLab Solutions
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Coalition on Human Needs
Common Sense Kids Action
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Demos
Economic Opportunity Institute
Equal Exchange
Equal Pay Today!
Equal Rights Advocates
Every Child Matters
Family Values @ Work
Feminist Majority Foundation
Food & Water Watch
Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.
Human Rights Campaign
Human Rights Watch
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
InkHouse
Institute for Science and Human Values
Interfaith Worker Justice
Jewish Women International (JWI)
Jobs With Justice
Justice in Aging
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
Labor Project for Working Families
Latinos for a Secure Retirement
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
League of Women Voters of the United States
Main Street Alliance
Make It Work
Mi Familia Vota
Mom2Mom Global

MomsRising.org
Movement Advancement Project
Ms. Foundation for Women
NARAL Pro-Choice America
National Abortion Federation
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
National Association for Rural Mental Health
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care
National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW)
National Council of La Raza
National Disability Rights Network
National Domestic Workers Alliance
National Education Association (NEA)
National Employment Law Project
National Employment Lawyers Association
National Hispanic Council on Aging
National Immigration Law Center
National Institute for Reproductive Health
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
National WIC Association
National Women's Law Center
National Working Positive Coalition
Oxfam America
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Partnership for America's Children
Patagonia
People For the American Way
People's Action
PHI
Physicians for Reproductive Health
PICO National Network
PL+US: Paid Leave for the United States
Positive Women's Network – United States of America

Project Inform
Promundo-US
Public Advocacy for Kids
Restaurant Opportunities Centers United (ROC United)
RESULTS
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Sierra Club
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Social Security Works
State Innovation Exchange
Sugar Law Center for Economic & Social Justice
TASH
U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce
UltraViolet
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation
United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW)
The United State of Women
United States Breastfeeding Committee
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
The Voter Participation Center
Women Employed
Women's Voices Women Vote Action Fund
Working Families Party
Workplace Fairness
Young Invincibles
YWCA USA
ZERO TO THREE

Alabama

AIDS Alabama
National Association of Social Workers, Alabama Chapter

Arizona

American Association of University Women (AAUW), Tucson Branch
Arizona AFL-CIO
Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence
Child and Family Resources, Inc.
Healthy Families, Healthy Workplaces Coalition
NARAL Pro-Choice Arizona
Pima Area Labor Federation
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Arizona
Southwest Center for Economic Integrity

California

9to5 California
Association of CA Caregiver Resource Centers

BreastfeedLA
California Breastfeeding Coalition
California Child Care Resource & Referral Network
California Women's Law Center
California Work & Family Coalition
Child Care Law Center
Clergy & Laity United For Economic Justice (CLUE)
LAANE
Legal Aid at Work
National Council of Jewish Women, California
National Council of Jewish Women, Los Angeles Section
National Council of Jewish Women, Sacramento Section
Our Family Coalition, LGBTQ Families USA
Women's Foundation of California
YWCA Berkeley/Oakland
YWCA Glendale
YWCA Pasadena-Foothill Valley
YWCA San Francisco & Marin
YWCA Silicon Valley

Colorado

9to5 Colorado
Almost Home, Inc.
La Plata County Thrive! Living Wage Coalition
National Council of Jewish Women, Colorado State Policy Advocate

Connecticut

All Our Kin
Connecticut Working Families Party
CT Campaign for Paid Family Leave
NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut
National Association of Social Workers, Connecticut Chapter

District of Columbia

Bright Start Early Care & Preschool
Jews United for Justice

Delaware

Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families

Florida

Central Florida Jobs with Justice
Florida Alliance of Community Development Corporations, Inc.
Jacksonville Area National Organization for Women
Lake Community Action Agency
National Council of Jewish Women, Florida State Policy Advocate
National Council of Jewish Women, Florida Vice State Policy Advocate
National Council of Jewish Women, Sarasota/Manatee Section

Georgia

9to5 Georgia
Atlanta Women for Equality

Hawaii

Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women
YWCA O'ahu

Illinois

Illinois Hunger Coalition
National Council of Jewish Women, South Cook Section State Policy Advocacy Committee
North/Northwest Suburban Illinois National Organization for Women
Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry
Project IRENE
YWCA Elgin
YWCA McLean County
YWCA of the University of Illinois

Indiana

Indiana Institute for Working Families
YWCA Evansville

Iowa

COASAP
YWCA Ames-ISU

Kansas

KANZA Mental Health and Guidance Center, Inc.
YWCA Northeast Kansas

Kentucky

Kentucky Equal Justice Center

Louisiana

Greater Light Ministries
Louisiana State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
Louvis Services, Inc.
NAMI New Orleans
National Association of Social Workers, Louisiana Chapter
Shelter Resources, Inc. d.b.a. Belle Reve New Orleans
YWCA Greater Baton Rouge

Maine

Maine Center for Economic Policy
Maine Women's Lobby
National Council of Jewish Women, Maine
YWCA Mount Desert Island

Maryland

AIDS Action Baltimore
Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore
Job Opportunities Task Force
Maryland National Organization for Women
Maryland United for Peace and Justice
Out for Justice, Inc.
PeterCares House
Public Justice Center
Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition

Massachusetts

American Friends Service Committee, Cambridge Office
Greater Boston Legal Services
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
YWCA Boston
YWCA Cambridge
YWCA Central Massachusetts
YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts

Michigan

Michigan League for Public Policy
National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Detroit Section
Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Justice Team
YWCA Kalamazoo
YWCA of Metropolitan Detroit

Minnesota

Children's Defense Fund – Minnesota
ISALAH
TakeAction Minnesota
Women's Foundation of Minnesota
YWCA Minneapolis

Mississippi

Every Mother, Inc.

Missouri

Missouri Jobs with Justice
NARAL Pro-Choice Missouri
National Council of Jewish Women, St. Louis Section

Nebraska

Holland Children's Movement

New Hampshire

Campaign for a Family Friendly Economy
W.S. Badger Company

New Jersey

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) – New Jersey
Anti-Poverty Network of New Jersey
BlueWaveNJ
CWA Local 1036
Family Voices New Jersey
National Council of Jewish Women, Essex County Section
National Council of Jewish Women, West Morris Section
National Organization for Women, New Jersey Chapter
National Organization for Women, Northern New Jersey Chapter
New Jersey Citizen Action
New Jersey Tenants Organization
New Jersey Time to Care Coalition
Reform Jewish Voice of New Jersey
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network

New Mexico

Southwest Women's Law Center

New York

Children's Defense Fund – New York
Citizen Action of New York
Community Resource Exchange
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition
LISC New York City
Masten Block Club Coalition, Inc.
National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (NFBPWC) - New York City
New York Paid Leave Coalition
New York State Breastfeeding Coalition
Pilgrim-St. Luke's United Church of Christ
Restaurant Opportunities Centers (ROC) of New York
YMCA Greater Rochester
YWCA of Binghamton and Broome County
YWCA Brooklyn
YWCA of Rochester and Monroe County

North Carolina

National Association of Social Workers, North Carolina Chapter
NC Child
Sisters of Mercy South Central Community
YWCA of Asheville

North Dakota

North Dakota Women's Network

Ohio

ACTION OHIO Coalition For Battered Women
Communities United For Action
Innovation Ohio
National Coalition of 100 Black Women Central Ohio Chapter
National Council of Jewish Women, Columbus Section
National Council of Jewish Women, Ohio State Policy Advocate
National Organization for Women, Columbus, Ohio Chapter
Ohio National Organization for Women, Inc.
Ohio Women's Public Policy Network
Toledo Area Jobs with Justice & Interfaith Worker Justice Coalition
Universal Health Care Action Network of Ohio
YWCA Dayton
YWCA Warren

Oregon

Cascade AIDS Project
Family Equality Council
Family Forward Oregon
NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon
Oregon Foundation for Reproductive Health
YWCA Greater Portland

Pennsylvania

Essential Energy
National Organization for Women, Southwest Pennsylvania Chapter
PathWays PA
Philadelphia Jobs With Justice
Restaurant Opportunities Centers (ROC) of Pennsylvania
Westmoreland Community Action
Women's Law Project
YWCA Greater Pittsburgh
YWCA Titusville
YWCA Tri-County Area

Rhode Island

Economic Progress Institute
Planned Parenthood Votes! Rhode Island
Women's Fund of Rhode Island
YWCA Rhode Island

South Carolina

National Association of Social Workers, South Carolina Chapter

Tennessee

Black Children's Institute of Tennessee

Texas

NARAL Pro-Choice Texas
National Council of Jewish Women, Texas State Policy Advocates
YWCA San Antonio

Vermont

National Association of Social Workers, Vermont Chapter
Voices for Vermont's Children

Virginia

NARAL Pro-Choice Virginia

Washington

Kulshan Community Land Trust
National Council of Jewish Women, Washington State Policy Advocate
Washington Community Action Network
Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO
YWCA Clark County
YWCA Olympia
YWCA Pierce County

West Virginia

Safe Housing and Economic Development, Inc.

Wisconsin

9to5 Wisconsin
YWCA Madison

Wyoming

Better Wyoming

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