

# Paid Family Leave Coalition

## Response to Universal Paid Leave Bill Discussion Draft / “Committee Print” of 2/8

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No one who lives or works in the District of Columbia should have to choose between caring for their family and earning the money they need. We are really pleased to see that the revised bill provides a good, solid, usable policy for the people and situations that it currently includes. However the bill cuts out huge groups of people and their families, and doesn't cover some of the key life events or situations it needs to. **We look forward to working with the Council to make a strong program better and make sure it covers everyone who needs it.**

Issue	Original Bill, October 2015	Discussion Draft, 2/8/2016	Comments
<b>Length of leave</b>	16 weeks annually	12 weeks annually	12 weeks is a minimum starting point, but many families really need 16. The final bill should include provisions to automatically increase the length of leave to 16 weeks once the fund is solvent.
<b>Wage replacement</b>	100% of average weekly pay up to \$1000, 50% after, up to a cap of \$3000/week	90% of average weekly pay up to twice the minimum wage (about \$840), 50% after, up to cap of \$1500/week	This pay rate is important for keeping our most struggling families afloat. The revised rate is adequate, but we cannot allow it to go any lower, especially as many people can barely afford DC's high cost of living on their current pay.
<b>Who is eligible?</b>	Everyone who lives or works in the District	Only people who work for private employers in the District: NO Federal workers, NO District government employees, NO District residents who commute to MD or VA	Everyone who works needs this benefit. If we exclude all these groups of people, that's over 40% of working DC residents. Council should let individuals in these groups choose to opt out of the benefit if they like.
<b>Employment rights</b>	Job protection: keep your job once you've worked 6 months  No requirement to use up accrued sick or safe leave	Job protection only after 12 months  Required to spend down all accrued legally mandated sick and safe leave before accessing paid leave fund	12 months is too long – in high-turnover industries no one will ever qualify. And 6 months is plenty of time for someone to be fully trained and valuable to the employer.  Sick leave is for short-term, urgent needs, and people returning from long-term leave need it just like anyone else. You shouldn't have to exhaust other options before taking leave you need.
<b>Definition of “family”</b>	Broad: includes blood relatives, domestic partners, and spouses	Very narrow: only people who you have “legal custody” of, i.e. children, spouses, and domestic partners. No parents, siblings, grandparents, children over 18...	Unacceptable. This narrow definition excludes too many of the people that anyone would feel responsible for and need to take care of. Common sense and compassion demand that a final bill include a reasonable definition of family.
<b>Medical and other conditions covered</b>	Broad: includes mental health, end of life care, family care, parental leave	Very narrow: mental health is excluded, and seems to exclude end of life care, some outpatient care, and other conditions not requiring hospitalization	Unacceptable. Medical professionals should make crucial medical decisions about whether someone needs leave, not politicians or business lobbyists. We need a bill that covers the real situations our families face.