

# FAMILY Act Supports Low-Wage Workers and Their Families

## What is the FAMILY Act?

The **Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act** (S. 463/H.R. 1185) would establish a federal program giving almost every worker up to **12 weeks of paid leave to bond with a new child, care for a seriously ill family member, or treat their own serious illness.**



## Why do we need a national paid leave law?

The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides unpaid, job protected leave to certain employees.

FMLA hasn't helped workers earning low wages. They can't afford to take unpaid leave. Many aren't even eligible. As a result, they can be fired for taking time off and fall into poverty.

Workers earning low wages are disproportionately women, BIPOC, LGBTQ, and sole breadwinners. Every day we go without national paid leave, economic inequality becomes more entrenched.<sup>1</sup>

## How would the FAMILY Act work?

- + **Create an insurance program** funded by modest contributions from employers and employees (0.2% of wages).<sup>2</sup>
- + **Pay up to 66 percent** of employees' monthly wages, capped at \$4,000 per month in the first year.
- + **Require participation from all employers**— regardless of their industry or how many people they employ.
- + **Prohibit employers from firing or discriminating** against employees who use or intend to use family and medical leave insurance benefits.



The **FAMILY Act** acknowledges diverse families by including **elders** and **same-sex families**.

The **FAMILY Act** would cover children, spouses, domestic partners, and parents.

# The FAMILY Act would benefit everyone

The FAMILY Act would help families meet their needs at home while protecting workers, sustaining wages, and keeping more women in the workforce. The law would also prevent middle- and low-income families from sliding into poverty.<sup>3</sup>

## WORKERS

The FAMILY Act would promote retention, decrease training costs, and increase employee satisfaction and productivity. It would also level the playing field for businesses.

## EMPLOYERS

The FAMILY Act would allow small businesses that couldn't otherwise afford it to offer paid leave and compete for the best workers. Businesses already offering paid leave will see helpful cost savings. Seventy-five percent of small businesses support federal paid leave.<sup>4</sup>

## SMALL BUSINESSES

## Paid family and medical leave has strong public support

Nine states and D.C. have paid family and medical leave laws in the absence of federal action.

Additional states are considering similar policies.



**85 percent** of people support paid leave to deal with a serious health condition

**82 percent** of people support paid maternity leave

**69 percent** of people support paid paternity leave

**67 percent** of people support paid family care leave

Source: Pew Research Center poll of national workers<sup>5</sup>

With overwhelming support for paid leave, **now is the time to make the FAMILY Act federal law.**

To learn more, contact [jobquality@clasp.org](mailto:jobquality@clasp.org).

# Fact Sheet Citations

1. Jocelyn Frye, "On the Frontlines at Work and at Home: The Disproportionate Economic Effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Women of Color," Center for American Progress, 2020. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2020/04/23/483846/frontlines-work-home/>.
2. Jeff Hayes and Heidi Hartmann, *Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance: Modest Costs are a Good Investment in America's Economy*, Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2018, <https://iwpr.org/publications/paid-family-medical-leave-insurance-time-come>.
3. Pamela Joshi, Maura Baldiga, Alison Earle, Theresa Osypuk and Dolores Acevedo-Garcia, "Paid Family and Medical Leave Social Protection in the U.S.: Lessons Learned About Targeting Low-Income Workers," 5th Conference of the Regulating for Decent Work Network, July 2017.
4. PL+US, Promundo, and Parental Leave Corporate Task Force, "Paid Leave and the Pandemic: Effective Workplace Policies and Practices for a Time of Crisis and Beyond," 2021, <https://paidleave.us/paidleaveandthepandemic>.
5. Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Kim Parker, Nikki Graf, and Gretchen Livingston, *Americans Widely Support Paid Family and Medical Leave, but Differ Over Specific Policies*, Pew Research Center, 2017, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2017/03/23/americans-widely-support-paid-family-and-medical-leave-but-differ-over-specific-policies>.