

CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL POLICY

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ANDREA LINDEMANN: Thank you very much. This is Andrea Lindemann from the Center for Law and Social Policy, CLASP. Welcome to this audio conference call on Paid Family Leave and one approach to it called Family Security Insurance. I am pleased to welcome our speakers to the call.

With us today we have Mary Beth Maxwell, Senior Advisor at the Department of Labor; Ann O'Leary, of the Berkeley Center on Health, Economic & Family Security at the UC Berkeley Law School; Katie Corrigan of Georgetown University Law Center; and Jeff Hild, Legislative Director for Representative Pete Stark. Thank you all for joining us today. The U.S. is the only developed country in the world without some form of national Paid Family Leave which means that too many Americans today struggle to manage work and family responsibilities.

Only 11 percent of workers have access to Paid Family Leave through their employers. Short-term disability insurance provides access to personal medical leave to fewer than 40 percent of workers. Today we'll ask our guests, why should American proceed Paid Family Leave. How could the family leave program be designed. We have a variety of perspectives here with us today. We'll hear what the Obama administration thinks about Paid Family Leave, what office on Capitol Hill is working on and we'll explore some of the details of our proposals for how to design the Paid Family Leaves program for today's society.

The good news is that the idea of Paid Family Leave is gaining traction. There is the new Family Security Insurance proposal that's our focus today, as well as other ideas that have already been circulating and there maybe more to come. Please refer for more information on these proposals, including page 154 of the Family Security Insurance reports for a good comparison. CLASP expects to have future audio conference calls that will drill down into the distinction between the various proposals.

A small housekeeping detail for our call, the question and answer process. From now until the end of the call, please feel free to send questions to audioconference@CLASP, that's C-L-A-S-P dot org. We will read your questions out loud and then answer as many as we have time for. Let's get started. Mary Beth, let's begin with you, welcome.

MARY BETH MAXWELL: Thank you Andrea, thank you very much to you and CLASP for convening this call and for your ongoing work on this issues especially Andrea, for low-income workers. We really appreciate the work that you all at CLASP do and this conference call is a great opportunity to move the conversation forward. And I also want to say it's really an honor to join the really talented and committed expert speakers that you've lined up for this call Jeff Hild a thank you to your boss Representative Stark for his leadership and to Ann O'Leary from Berkeley and Katie Corrigan from Georgetown University Law Center.

None of you folks are strangers to the Department of the Labor. We're really proud of the work we've done with you and we really appreciative of the valuable research and policy analysis that you all do that inform the public debate and also inform our work at the DOL. So I think you want me to speak a little bit to why this is important.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: That sounds great. Yes, why don't you talk a little bit about why work family issues are important? Thanks.

MARY BETH MAXWELL: Great, thanks. I want to also just bring greetings to you all as well from my boss, Secretary Hilda Solis, there are a lot of friends on the call, I know, but she has got an incredibly long track record working on these issues as in the California State Legislature and then in the U.S. Congress and now at the U.S. Department of Labor. So lots of you know her incredible work over the years on these issues and why it's so important to her and to us. And I think you guys also know that you have a lot of

allies in this administration on issues that work and family, too many to name but Valerie Jarrett and the First Lady, and really, it goes all the way up to President Obama who has an incredible commitment to these issues.

Speaking to the why, we'd say we know that these are issues for women and for men and for all families, whether you care for children or for aging parents or a sick loved one, all of us in the full diversity of our families need and want to both care well for our loved ones and do our absolute best job at work. And that's what these policies that you all are exploring today are about. Work family balance is not off to the side, it's not a luxury, it's a core bread and butter issue of economic security for working families.

Too many families have to make a choice between the care of their families and the paycheck that they absolutely need. We know our family and work patterns have shifted over recent decades. Families have changed, work places have changed and the demand for time off from work to address family needs has grown dramatically. We need new solutions that work for 21st century workplaces and for 21st century families.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: Great, thanks Mary Beth. And could you tell us a little bit about what the DOL is doing in the work family arena?

MARY BETH MAXWELL: Yes, happy to do that. I think several folks that are probably on the call and a number of you that are speaking, participated in some of the amazing forums at the Women's Bureau under the leadership of Sara Manzano-Díaz and Latifa Lyles has organized. You all know that the First Lady convened last year the first ever White House Summit on Workplace Flexibility. And the Women's Bureau has picked up a ton and has been organizing a series of really dynamic forums and a national dialog on Workplace Flexibility all over the country. Gathering best practices, continuing to focus national attention on the issues bringing together workers, employers, advocates, unions, in all different sectors of the economy to help us identify policy solutions that can work, that's number one.

Number two, little different than paid leave but I think near and dear to all of our hearts in terms of work family balance, it's just worthwhile lifting up that the Affordable Care Act requires employers to provide nursing mothers with reasonable break time and a private space for expressing breast milk. You all know it's a huge deal for so many working parents. And DOL will of course be providing compliance assistance and enforcing this new federal law. It was a statement of our President's support for these issues that this was included in the Affordable Care Act.

The third big piece that we're doing at DOL is working on gathering new data to better inform work family policy so that we really have more accurate information about what families need. The Wage and Hour Division will be conducting a new FMLA survey for the first time in 10 years and BLS with support from the Women's Bureau will, for the first time ever, be adding questions about leave to the American Time Use Survey. That new data, which we all know we very much need, will be incredibly helpful to your continued efforts as well as ours in terms of looking at new policy solutions.

Finally, the last piece Andrea, that I would lift up, is that even in a really tough budget climate, President felt so strongly about state paid leave programs and some of the innovations that are happening in the states that we need to encourage and learn from that he put it into his budget for 2011 and then again for 2012, and has asked the Department of Labor to design a pilot project to help make it possible for more states to participate, for more states to have Paid Leave programs.

The vast majority of American workers have family care giving responsibilities outside of work and they have no full time caregiver at home. We know that majority of working families who have children have all of the adults in the labor force and that a rapidly growing number of workers have elder care responsibilities.

In another statistic, the average American couple work is close to a combined 90 hours a week, resulting in really diminished time to handle family responsibilities. And changes in people's family circumstances, whether it's the birth of a new child or is it serious illness of an older relative puts great stress on their

economic security, particularly for low-wage families but really even for middle income families in this economy.

The administration has committed to promoting the state development of paid leave programs that provide leave to employees for reasons covered under FMLA such as the birth or adoption of a child or care for a sick elder relative for an extended period. And the state paid leave program will provide grants to assist additional states to establish Paid Leave Programs. The concept of this is to build on the success of California and New Jersey and be really flexible to meet the needs of states that are at various stages of either designing or implementing or expanding programs.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: We had a little glitch there. But Mary Beth, thanks so much for taking the time to be with us today. I know our audience appreciates it. A quick reminder, please e-mail me your questions. It's a simple e-mail address, audioconference@clasp.org. Ann and Katie, are you with us?

ANN O'LEARY: Yes, I am here. This is Ann.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: Great, hi. Your organizations jointly released the National Paid Family Leave policy proposal called *Family Security Insurance: A New Foundation for Economic Security*. You currently drive home the rationale. This includes workforce changes like the ones that Mary Beth mentioned. As you note in your report, we're living longer, working longer and providing more care for aging relatives. In the Federal Family Medical Leave Act, it's helpful for some, but inadequate because it only reaches about half the workforce and since the leave is unpaid, many workers cannot afford to take it.

Ann, could you give us the top line statement about your proposal? What would this proposal do?

ANN O'LEARY: Thank you so much. Family Security Insurance as Mary Beth outlined so well is really responding to the issues that we are facing today, which is that we have more women breadwinners than ever before, more families relying on two incomes, more single parent families relying on the economic securities provided. But yet we have situations in which families must take leave from their jobs either because they have their own disability, they have caregiver responsibilities or they have a new child in their family. As a result of that, we recognized that we don't have any system of national insurance.

Together with Georgetown University Law Center and a group of faculty and staff at the Berkley Law Center, UC Berkley, we together decided that it was high time to look at the social science research that is out there and really think about what would it take to create a national system, a national social insurance for Paid Family Leave. So that is what this proposal does. It's really one idea but we believe it will be a real resource at the national level and also at state levels as more states experiment with Paid Family Leave. So I am happy to talk more about it as we go forward.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: Great, thanks Ann. Let's get into some of the basic elements about who is included and what is included first and then we can tackle financing and the amount of benefits that a worker could receive. What life events would qualify an employee to receive income replacements?

ANN O'LEARY: The life events are similar to those of family and medical leave which is that anybody who has a short-term disability, a serious illness that requires them to be away from work would qualify. I think it's important to recognize that in our country we do have a national social insurance for long-term disability that's provided through social security. But if you're temporarily disabled and it's not a work injury, you're out of luck in terms of financial security for your family. So that's one of the important reasons.

The other two are if you need to provide care to somebody who is seriously ill. As we know, we have an aging population in which our elders are living longer and as a result we have more care giving needs in our society. This was a real problem that we don't have enough provision of Paid Family Leaves. And we don't have enough paid caregiver. So often, it relies on family caregivers, sometimes who have to leave work or take serious pay cuts in order to do this.

So that would be another reason. And the third reason is for the birth or adoption or a new child in a home related to foster care. So these are all the reasons in which you would be able to get wage replacement, partial wage replacements – to be out of the work for a short period of time to deal with these situations.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: Great, thanks Ann. What employees would be eligible to receive income replacement?

ANN O'LEARY: Well I think it's really important to recognize what type of program it is. This is the program that is trying to encourage people to stay attached to the labor force, to keep working but is not intended to be a social welfare program. I say that because workers would qualify but they need to have exhibited that they have a serious attachment to the workforce.

It would require that in the previous year you would have worked 950 hours, that amounts to about working 20 hours a week for the year and being able to take 4.5 weeks off. So it does encourage people who work part-time but it also shows that you have to have a serious commitment to the workforce. It's a lower threshold in the FMLA, I think that's important to recognize. We are trying to capture part-time workers but this is not intended to be a program for people who are transitioning out of the workforce all together.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: Thanks. You recommend that Family Security Insurance income only be available for periods of time off that last longer than five days, why did you include that requirement?

ANN O'LEARY: It's important to recognize that this is not intended to be a form of paid sick days. There is another campaign that's going on around the country that many people are aware of. We do believe that employers should provide short-term paid sick days, but this is really intended for families who are dealing with longer term problems.

The five days waiting period, is for two reasons, such as to say that employees should have to show that they need to be out of the workplace for more than that period of time and then in some sense its a co-payments to require them to make a commitment that they are going to take care of the first part and then go forward from there. California Paid Family Leave has a similar provision, they have a waiting period as well, so we modeled on the California program.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: I'd like to add a quick reminder to the audience at this point. Please send us your questions at audioconference@clasp.org. Ann, one more question for you before we sneak in Jeff Hild. What employers would be required to offer Family Security Insurance?

ANN O'LEARY: Well, it's important that we recognize that all employers. Just as all employers have to provide their employees with social security. In the same way, all employers would have to ensure that their employees have the availability of Paid Family Leave.

We would pay for it and we'll talk more about this later but it would be a joint contribution in terms of employer and employee payroll tax. All employers would be required to allow their employees to pay into the system of Family Security Insurance. However it doesn't provide the job protection or require employers to allow employees to take it in terms of a job protection. That's really provided through the Family and Medical Leave Act. So this would be coupled with the Family and Medical Leave Act.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: The next topic is money. How financing is done and how much financial benefit recipients get. First, I am going to give Congressman Stark's Legislative Director, Jeff Hild, a chance to jump in.

Congressman Stark represents California's 13th district. Californian family leave has been in the news a lot lately. In California, there is a new research report from Eileen Appelbaum and Ruth Milkman titled *Leaves That Pay: Employer and Worker Experiences with Paid Family Leave in California*. The study found that the vast majority of businesses reported the law had minimal impact on their business operations, despite previous opposition in the business communities to the law's passage.

A political question first about the research findings, from your perspective is the congressional insider. Do you think these findings will get Paid Family Leave more attraction on the Hill?

JEFF HILD: I think the research that Ruth and Eileen have done is really vital for us moving forward. As you mentioned when the Californian law was being passed and implemented, there is a sort of sky is falling mentality of the business community in that hasn't panned out as their research shows. In the past, my boss has introduced paid leave legislation. That's the biggest push back we've gotten is what's the impact on the business community going to be.

If you really look at what Eileen and Ruth – their findings are overwhelmingly positive. I think it was over 90 percent of employers they surveyed had either a positive or a neutral view on how the program affected performance, turnover, employee moral, the profitability of their businesses. Then if you look at small businesses, it was even more positive. This is taking place in 2010 in the midst of recession and really high unemployment in California. They've still this positive outlook on it.

For our purposes and Congress moving forward, it really allows us to budget the other side of our arguments that this is good for families and employees, but it's also good for employers as well. Another interesting thing in Ruth and Eileen's research is they found that over half of businesses coordinated their leave benefits with the state law. So that was even able to save them some on their bottom line through the benefit packages that they offered. So I think going forward, it will be really helpful for us to highlight that research.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: Great, thanks. And what can the advocates who were listening on the line around the country do to make sure that their members of Congress are familiar with these research findings?

JEFF HILD: Well I think in general it's important to include paid leave in their agendas and their talking points when they make visits. Obviously we'd love folks to support our bill when we introduce it. But if it's supporting the President's budget proposal, I think that's important.

There's ways you can bring this up and conversations about paid sick days, about pushing for equal pay, any sort of labor rights issues or even talking about it in the context of social security, which we'll get into us a little bit, but with my boss's bill that we hope to introduce soon, puts paid leave benefits in the context of social security disability insurance programs, because I think really finding those opportunities to message those and bring it up is important.

And at the state level as well, these efforts of the state level are taking root, I think it's really important to highlight what's happened in California and that it has been a success. It has been good for both employees and employers. I think just picking every opportunity we can to highlight it is key.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: Representative Stark has had built in past Congresses on Paid Family Leaves, and so could you give us a broad strokes what you hope to accomplish through Federal Paid Leave Legislation?

JEFF HILD: Sure, I think in general our idea is really similar in principal to what Ann and Katie have talked about. We want an insurance system, not a welfare system. We want everyone to be covered. So unlike FMLA, we want the coverage to be based on work history and employment rather than who your specific employer may be. We also think it's important to build on what works in the existing state and federal systems.

We don't think it's necessary to create a brand new bureaucracy that we can deliver this benefit through existing delivery systems. We think it's important that the program be self funded and be sustainable, and the best way to do that is probably through a payroll tax which is what has happened in California. And a pretty small bump in the payroll tax can create a solvent system. And we think that it needs to work for all workers. So including part-time workers and including lower-wage workers, so that means that you need a more progressive wage replacement system.

Those are the parameters that we're working under. As far as political goals, I can touch on that now or we can get to that in a bit if you'd like.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: Sure. Go for it.

JEFF HILD: Mary Beth and others have talked about the budget constraints that the country is under and the economic constraints. So I don't think we envision the legislation we plan to introduce as, getting to the floor of this congress, but I think it is an important point in this conversation about paid leave that would really start to build some momentum and really create a foundation for moving forward. What we're going to try and do is have a go for following the general principal that I outlined but doing it through the social security systems.

We think that can provide progressive wage replacements that are based on work history using some of the existing formulas. The hope is that we can create a little momentum to use this as a chance to talk about paid leave, hopefully doing some of the efforts at the state level and really try and move the ball forward so to speak.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: You're talking about the bill that Representative Stark will be introducing in this Congress. If I understand you correctly, you'll have some changes about using existing systems and the social security system to administer and define the paid leave?

JEFF HILD: Correct. What we'd like to do is work within the current social security disability insurance system and, Ann had mentioned earlier that we have long-term disability insurance in this country through social security, but not short-term disability insurance. So we really think we can build within that structure. There is a progressive benefit formula wage replacement system in place under the SSDI program and good workforce attachment requirements in there. We think we can filter that to create a national system for paid leave benefits and also having the benefit of having more workers buy into the social security systems so that it's not viewed solely as a retirement benefit. Obviously there is other things we need to work on about setting up such as an additional trust fund within that system and nothing with current social security benefits. But sort of using the delivery system or creating a separate funding structure.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: Jeff do you have time to take an audience question before you head out to your business in California?

JEFF HILD: Definitely.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: You touched on this previously when you talked about the political scene these days. Mark Gruenberg from Press Associates Union News Service asks, what are the realistic prospects of getting any family leave legislation paid or unpaid through this Congress, given the nature of the current majority and there is extreme pro business bias? I think you touched on that part of the question and then the second part of the question is in beyond women's rights group who are you reaching out to for support? If unions, which ones?

JEFF HILD: On the first part, it's right that the chances are minimal and we're certainly realistic about that, as I said, we think it's important to have sort of a stake in the ground and a piece of legislation that folks can rally around and we can use to keep pressing forward in the short-term. In addition to women's group, certainly labor, we're reaching out to some of the children's group. We are reaching out to a really broad coalition support when we do roll the bill out here hopefully in the next couple of months.

ANN O'LEARY: If you mind me jumping in, this is Ann. Just to add a little bit to that. I think it's important for people to remember that it took quite some time for the Family Medical Leave Act to pass in our country and that one of the things that happened in the lead-up to that is that states really started acting on their own and experimenting with what was working. You are already seeing that happen here in California. I think the research that Jeff talked about is critical in terms of having a national momentum.

Then of course New Jersey has now in the second year of their paid family leave and I think with the Obama Administration is using some state money into this could really help in this effort.

So I think all of us we're working on this see it as certainly something that will take some time to pass, but we see this as really critical and urgent to family economic security and really necessary in terms of having a national conversation. There should be congressional hearings going on about this, there should be talk about this. And I think we all feel committed to doing more. And I think the other group that I would just mentioned that Jeff left out is we also are going to be working with groups like retirees and elder care groups who are really worried about some of the issues regarding people who are aging. They either want to stay in the workforce or need care in their home.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: Great, thanks Ann. Ann, you mentioned of having a combination of state activity and the federal bill. So if you have time, I'd like to ask you the next question which is from Rachel Scott at the Iowa Department at Human Rights. She asks, is the time of the advocates better spend pushing for a federal effort or for individual state efforts?

ANN O'LEARY: I'd hate to say one way or the other but I certainly think it's really important at this stage right now that there are – to the extent that there are a number of states we know that are receptive to these ideas, there is really important issues going on and that this can work. Of course, states are facing serious budget issues.

I think one of the important things is having some federal money will help get the administrative structure setup for a state system, but ultimately one of the reasons we realized – whether it's Jeff and Representative Stark, or Katie Corrigan and I are working on this, or others who are working on this is that in the end of the day, we need a national system. Everybody in this country should have access to this. They should have equal access to it. It should be a universal national program. I think that more momentum needs to be put towards that. Certainly one way to create momentum is to have some state actions.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: Great, thank you. Jeff thanks for taking the time to be with us today. I know you need to run, but we really appreciate your time and your perspective.

JEFF HILD: Certainly, thanks for having me.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: Let's turn to the administration and financing of the Family Security Insurance proposal. We have Katie Corrigan with us from Georgetown. I'd like to direct this next question to you Katie. How do you propose the Family Security Insurance system be administered?

KATIE CORRIGAN: It is interesting especially coming off this question from this great state of Iowa about the interaction of how state programs and federal programs work together. I mean I guess this is just another plug for a lot more action and experimentation at the state level because we really spend a lot of time both in the books and then on the phone with people that actually administer the Paid Family Leave and temporary disability insurance programs in New Jersey and California to really ask them nitty gritty questions because one of the principals we were working off of – and I really loved the principals that Jeff, articulated earlier, that his boss is looking at because this really echoes our goals and objectives which we outlined on page 19 of our report.

One of the principals and objectives was we wanted to ensure efficient delivery of the benefit so that people can actually get the income replacement when they needed it, and not weeks or months later. So this question of mundane details of how you actually put a program like this together was something that we've spent quite a bit of time on. And some of my co-authors from Georgetown Pierce Blue and Sharon Masling like I said really talk a lot about this.

So the bottom line is that the Family Security Insurance program, as we envision it, should be administered by either at single federal agency along the lines, I think to what Jeff is talking about in terms of social security or a federal-state partnership. If you think that's a non-answer, perhaps you'd be right, but the reason why we fudged it that way was what we felt like we were offering in this report was really breaking

out what are the different issues no matter whether you go social security or whether you do something that models some of the other insurance programs we've got when we add it to DOL regardless of which agency is administering, there are some questions that you have to answer that are somewhat unique for a system where you're trying to cut checks for temporary disability as opposed to permanent disability.

For short periods of time, for things home care giving that may not be year long and certainly not things you can plan for like your retirements. We really felt like there were certain administrative questions that needed to be answered that were specific to this program that were unlike some of the other federal programs currently administered. But as I said before, even though we took a lot of time parsing it out, there is a lot of creative thinking, a lot to learn already from many years of implementing temporary disability insurance at the state level and the more recent example around Paid Family Leave in California and New Jersey.

And in a place like Washington State where they don't have law on this yet but they've really been trying to work with the state agency there to think about how would you construct such a system. So administration is not always the sexiest part of our report but I think that was something we were trying to save other people time on. We have a really strong chapter on that.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: Great, thank you. Sorry to stick you with a non sexy portion of the insurance program. Who would pay for the income replacement in the Family Security Insurance proposal and what was the rationale there?

KATIE CORRIGAN: I think here it's interesting because there are a bunch of different proposals both at the state level and now the federal level. We all are circling around payroll tax and different variations on who is contributing the tax.

In our proposal, we really felt strongly that employers and employees are going to benefit from this particular system. We've been having a sensible rational, predictable insurance system and this is going to help employers plan their benefit operations as well, and save them money down the line because we won't have such a scatter shot approach where costs come of all the sudden and where you have to pay high premiums on things like short term disability.

We really felt like as a matter of principal it's good to at least start the conversation given that this is something that's going to help, we think employers and employees that everybody should put in some of that payroll tax and that tax would cover the cost of both the benefits and the administration of the program.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: A few more detailed questions about the proposal, then we can take some audience questions and talk about a little more fun topics like low income workers and gender equity. What level of income replacement would an employee be able to receive under this proposal?

KATIE CORRIGAN: Again, I am so happy that you're doing this call because when you pickup a report that's well over 100 pages, it's often hard to really get excited about, how do I crack into this.

One of the things if you and anyone just picking up a report I think you should look for is that we really look at issues around temporary disability what we call parental care. So that's something where either you have a new child through adoption or birth and then care giving responsibilities. In three different buckets, because each one of those issues raises different concerns for the individual and the family. Different concerns for an employer and in sort of going to this issue, different public policy concerns.

For example if someone for temporary disability, we wanted to think about what is the appropriate benefit replacement rate. On temporary disability, an eligible recipient's wages would be replaced at 80 percent of the workers average weekly wage up to a maximum amount of 150 percent. For those of you like me, where the numbers sometimes are hard, we did a nice handy chart on page 11, where we really broke out an example of what that would look like on a page, insert dollars and cents.

For parental care, for a new child, an eligible recipient's wages would be replaced at 90 percent of the workers average weekly wage up to a maximum amount of a 150 percent. Then for care giving we go back

to 80 percent wage replacement. Again you'll see there is some difference; I think the commonality between all of them is very generous.

We want this to be an insurance program that people can use. We want people to take care of their own health. We want people to be able to do care giving for relatives. We want people to take care of their newborns and newly adopted kids. So we want the wage replacement rates to be high enough that people don't have to make the choice of well, I've been paying into this insurance program but I am really not going to be able – it's just not quite enough to make sense for me to take time off from work and take care of myself.

So we really have it, I would say the word is generous and then we built in different, I would say limiting principals and other products of the design.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: How long would an employee receive paid leave for each of the life events that you outlined?

KATIE CORRIGAN: Again for temporary disability, we have that the benefit would be available for up to 26 weeks per year but the actual duration of the benefit would really depend on what the doctor or medical provider recommends for that specific illness. We put a maximum amount of 26 weeks per year but really it depends on what the doctor's note says. Parental care for a new child. What we have here is that each parent would be eligible for 12 weeks of parental care for new child benefit within the first year of a child birth.

You'll see that it's kind of a use it or lose it model. One parent takes 12 weeks and they can't say I'll take my partners 12 too. We really wanted to emphasize that we want each parent to put that time in upfront. We will talk about this in a little bit, but this really gets specifically at some of our gender equity goals. Finally on care giving insurance, we allowed for 26 weeks of care giving benefit to be the maximum amount over the course of a lifetime and with any one year that would be 12 weeks.

You will see, when we really thought of this as a holistic system so that any one element we really read in combination would be other elements. So specifically the policy conundrums, on the care giving insurance we really wanted to make sure that that definition of who you could take care of was very broad because whether we were hearing anecdotes from the field and on ground in terms of what peoples real experiences or you just read the research, it's not like we depend on just our husband or wife or partner for care giving. All of us had different constellations of what we call family. We wanted to make sure that definition of who could take care of someone was very broad but we also felt like they needed to be some limiting principals around it.

I would read that care giving insurance benefit very much in combination with who is that to take care of people.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: Great and that is a perfect segway into an audience question we have, Donna Batten asks, do family members include siblings, in-laws and grand parents? These people are not covered in the current California bill according to Donna. How does your proposal define family members?

KATIE CORRIGAN: Our proposal – I don't want to say it out loud too specific because actually this is the one that we've spent so much time going back and forth on to make sure that we got the definition right. Definitely the principal and if you go back again to our start goals and objectives was that we wanted to make sure that that definition was very broad because we've definitely had heard that other state definitions, certainly the Family Medical Leave Act, that the definition of who could take care of someone was too narrow. I don't have the exact words right in front of me, but the answer is we are very much had that in mind as we drafted a broad definition.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: Great, thanks. How does your proposal recommend ensuring job securities for employees to take leave?

KATIE CORRIGAN: This is something that we obviously talked about all the way through because I think there is an intuitive logic that you're not going to take the money, you're not going to use that insurance benefits unless you know you'll be able to walk back into your job, i.e., you have that job protection. Certainly the Family Medical Leave Act is really the principal source of job protection for most folks in this country but as you pointed out in the beginning of the call, there is a whole host of people who are not covered. Particularly folks who work for small employers and that really skews towards low wage workers who are not covered.

I can't remember exactly statistics but something like half of folks are not covered under the Family Medical Leave Act. For us it was certainly critical to look at that, but we also felt – and this is partly practical on our end and partly philosophical – that the job protection was really almost like a whole other report.

We recommend that the Family Medical Leave Act's eligibility requirements around the size of the employer, that that threshold should move down to employers who have only 15 employees. We say that there should essentially be further conversation about what that should look like in detail, but we agree that to have a functioning insurance system; we also need to have that stop gap protection of labor standards like the FMLA.

And the question I think on the table is how do you get more people covered by that type of thing?

ANDREA LINDEMANN: How would this proposal help low income workers in particular?

KATIE CORRIGAN: As folks are paging through the report, one thing that we've spent a whole lot of time on was trying to get a real understanding of who has access to this stuff. Whether it's temporary disability, whether it's maternity and paternity leave, whether it's care giving leave, what are the numbers on that? As Ann said before, we believe we need to have a comprehensive system for the country but we believe that because when we went and looked at the numbers of who just accessed to this stuff, nobody gets good access to any of these three buckets of insurance through the private market – but low-wage workers by far the least.

If you are low-wage worker, access to things like maternity leave, paternity leave or short-term disability, is just not happening for you. There is a whole host of statistics in the report looking at those three variables, but I think that low-wage workers, there is a lot of room for improvement. But just the fact of having this type of insurance system where we do reach down to the smallest of employers, an employer of one, then you have access to this insurance program that you certainly are not getting access to right now through the private market.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: Katie, you touched on this earlier, but could you tell us briefly how do you factor in gender equity in your proposal?

KATIE CORRIGAN: Yes, I think that for us comes up to the most when you think about care giving. One thing that was really on our mind is that women have historically been and continue to be the primary caregivers in their families and that's not just true historically but that's now when most women are now employed outside the home. The norms around women in work obviously have shifted over the last 30 years quite radically. Certainly our basis hypothesis and one that I think there is probably consensus on, no matter what your solution is on the other end I think there is consensus that the world has changed and practices at work haven't and public policy hasn't caught up either.

We really looked at different triggers in terms of how you design a program like this, for example the eligibility requirements and the benefit requirements. From the benefit for parental care for new child, we really did want to say it's the responsibility of both parents to take time off and we also gave the benefit level amount high enough, because even lots of dads want that paternity leave but when you look at the numbers it just doesn't make sense because we still have wage gap in this country. Men are making more. When you look at your own family budget, having the father take off is a bigger financial hit. We really

put that wage level amount at 90 percent, that wage replacement, so that men wouldn't look at the numbers and just think no way, I can't do this.

We both put the number high enough that it mean logical sense in terms of your family budget and we've said hey, 12 weeks each. Really it's about acknowledging that the amount of care giving women are carrying in addition to the amount of work outside the home they are doing, doesn't seem like a sustainable proposition to us right now.

ANDREA LINDEMANN: Thanks Katie. It is time to wrap up. I'd like to thank all of our speakers for giving us their time today and thanks to the audience for sending in questions. Thank you again and have a great day. You'll see a follow-up e-mail that will contain resources and eventually a transcript of this call will be posted on CLASP's website. Thanks so much. Have a great day.

KATIE CORRIGAN: Thank you.

MARY BETH MAXWELL: Thanks.

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