

Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act

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The birth or adoption of a child should be the most joyous of occasions. But for millions of Americans, this happy time is marred by impossible choices between caring for their new children and keeping their families financially secure. Federal workers are among those who do not have paid parental leave. **Being forced to forego a paycheck to care for a new child puts a terrible burden on federal workers and their families – and, as a result, the federal government and taxpayers suffer.**

Supporting a Family Friendly Federal Workforce

As the nation's largest employer, with more than 2.1 million employees throughout the country,¹ the federal government should be a leader in establishing family friendly workplace policies. Yet it does not currently provide *any* paid parental leave.

The Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act would provide six weeks of paid time off for the birth, adoption or foster placement of a new child to federal workers who qualify for Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave. The Act would not provide employees with additional leave time; it would simply allow new parents – both fathers and mothers – to receive pay during a portion of their 12 weeks of FMLA leave.

Providing paid parental leave would save the government money by reducing turnover costs and help government employers recruit and retain talented workers.

Saving Money for the Federal Government and Retaining Valued Workers

Proving paid parental leave will save the government at least \$50 million per year in turnover and replacement costs.²

- ▶ Worker turnover declines and loyalty increases when workers are able to use paid leave to care for a new child. First-time mothers with access to paid maternity leave are more likely to return to work after the birth of their child.³
- ▶ Retaining workers saves money because replacing them is expensive. Turnover costs are estimated to be between 25 and 200 percent of a worker's annual salary.⁴
- ▶ The federal government could prevent the departure of 2,650 female employees per year by offering paid parental leave.⁵

Paid parental leave would help the federal government attract and retain valuable and much-needed younger workers.

- ▶ The federal workforce is aging. Seven out of 10 federal employees are older than 40, and 45 percent are older than 50.⁶ Even in this economy, the exodus of baby boomer workers will create a recruitment challenge for the federal government.
- ▶ Paid parental leave appeals to younger workers who are less likely to have accrued significant amounts of sick or vacation time and will be more likely to be forced to choose between a paycheck and caring for a newborn or newly adopted.
- ▶ Turnover has been reduced by 37.5 percent in federal agencies that report employee satisfaction with family friendly policies.⁷
- ▶ Leading companies offer working parents paid time off when they have a new child.⁸ In order to attract the best and brightest talent, the federal government should provide comparable benefits.

Paid parental leave is critical for the health and well-being of families.

- ▶ Federal agencies that offer family friendly policies are more likely to have employees reporting satisfaction managing work and family and overall job satisfaction.⁹
- ▶ Enabling working mothers and fathers to care for and bond with a new baby lays the foundation for healthy child development. Children who form strong emotional bonds or “attachment” with their parents are more likely to do well in school, have positive relationships with others, and enjoy good health during their lifetimes.

It is Past Time for Paid Leave

This year, President Obama signed a presidential memorandum to modernize the federal workforce by providing workers access to six weeks of paid sick time for caregiving, and he called on Congress to pass legislation giving federal employees six weeks of paid parental leave. The Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act answers that call. It would give federal workers economic security and allow them to better manage job and family.

A large and growing body of research – and the experiences of millions of workers and businesses – shows that policies that enable workers to care for themselves and their families without risking their jobs or economic security are good for workers, families, businesses and our economy. It is well past time that our nation truly honors families. It's time for the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act.

1 Partnership for Public Service. (2014). *Fact Sheet: Federal Workforce: Fed Figures 2014*. Retrieved 23 January 2015, from <http://ourpublicservice.org/publications/viewcontentdetails.php?id=40>

2 Miller, K., Suppan Helmuth, A., & Farabee-Siers, R. (2009). *The Need for Paid Parental Leave for Federal Employees: Adapting to a Changing Workforce*. Institute for Women's Policy Research Publication. Retrieved 23 January 2015, from <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/the-need-for-paid-parental-leave-for-federal-employees-adapting-to-a-changing-workforce-1>

3 Laughlin, L. (2011, October). *Maternity Leave and Employment Patterns of First-Time Mothers: 1961-2008*. Current Population Report. Retrieved 23 January 2015, from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/p70-128.pdf>

4 Boushey, H., & Glynn, S. (2012, November 16). *There Are Significant Business Costs to Replacing Employees*. Center for American Progress Publication. Retrieved 23 January 2015, from <http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/CostofTurnover.pdf>

5 See note 2.

6 See note 1.

7 Kim, J., & Wiggins, M. E. (2011). Family-Friendly Human Resource Policy: Is It Still Working in the Public Sector?. *Public Administration Review*, 71(5), 728-739.

8 World at Work. (2014, September). *Paid Time Off Programs and Practices*. Retrieved 23 January 2015, from <http://www.worldatwork.org/adimLink?id=76002>

9 See note 7.

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