

# Paid Leave Means A Stronger Alabama

JANUARY 2019

The vast majority of working people in the United States do not have paid family leave through their jobs.<sup>1</sup> **In Alabama, even *unpaid* leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act is inaccessible for 61 percent of working people.**<sup>2</sup> This means Alabamians face impossible choices when new children are born or adopted and when serious personal or family health needs inevitably arise.



## Alabamians are caught between their work and family responsibilities.

People in  
Alabama both  
work and  
provide care

- ▶ In 67 percent of all Alabama households with children – nearly 700,000 homes – all parents have paying jobs.<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ Women's wages support their households. In Alabama, 82 percent of Black mothers, 47 percent of white mothers and 40 percent of Latina mothers are key family breadwinners.<sup>4</sup>
- ▶ Women make up nearly half of Alabama's labor force (48 percent) and more than one-quarter of its business owners (28 percent).<sup>5</sup>
- ▶ Across the country, many men want to play a larger role in caring for their children,<sup>6</sup> but unsupportive policies and stigma hold them back.<sup>7</sup>

**Paid leave means not having to choose between job and family.**

## Alabama families will face increased family and medical care needs.

- ▶ More than one in five workers are age 55 and older.<sup>8</sup>
- ▶ In less than 15 years, the share of the state's population age 65 and older will grow by nearly 30 percent.<sup>9</sup>
- ▶ Older workers are more likely to experience serious medical conditions that require care.<sup>10</sup>
- ▶ Two people die every day from drug overdoses in Alabama.<sup>11</sup>

**Paid leave means older adults and working people of all ages can get the support they need to receive and provide critical care.**

The state's  
caregiving needs  
are significant,  
and growing

**Impossible choices between job and family are hurting the economy, and women suffer most.**

**Alabama's  
economy and  
families are  
suffering**

- ▶ In Alabama, there is a 12-percentage point gap in labor force participation between men and women, in part because the United States lacks family friendly policies.<sup>12</sup>
- ▶ Nationally, if women participated in the U.S. labor force at the same rates as women in countries with paid leave, our economy would benefit from more than \$500 billion in additional economic activity each year.<sup>13</sup>

**Paid leave means people – especially women – aren't forced to leave the labor force to care for their families or health, reducing turnover for employers and boosting the economy.**

**Alabamians need a real policy solution to address the country's paid leave crisis.**

A true paid leave policy would:

- ▶ Be cost-effective for workers, employers and the government;
- ▶ Cover all working people, apply equally to men and women and reflect a modern definition of family;
- ▶ Include the well-established reasons people need family and medical leave;
- ▶ Provide at least 12 weeks of leave and replace a substantial share of workers' usual wages; and
- ▶ Protect workers against adverse consequences for taking leave.

**A real  
national paid  
leave plan – the  
FAMILY Act – is  
the solution**

The Family And Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act is the only federal proposal that aligns with these criteria. And the sustainable national fund it would create would reduce the number of working families in Alabama facing significant economic insecurity when they need to take family and medical leave by 78 percent.<sup>14</sup>

**The FAMILY Act means a stronger economy, healthier families and businesses, greater equity regardless of a person's job and more workplace equality for women.**

**For more on the FAMILY Act, visit [NationalPartnership.org/theFAMILYAct](https://NationalPartnership.org/theFAMILYAct).**

- 1 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2018, September). *National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States, March 2018* (Tables 16 and 32). Retrieved 20 December 2018, from <https://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2018/employee-benefits-in-the-united-states-march-2018.pdf>; Percent of workers who have access to paid family leave by U.S. region: Northeast (23 percent), South (16 percent), Midwest (14 percent) and West (18 percent)
- 2 diversitydatakids.org. (2015). *Working Adults Who Are Eligible For and Can Afford FMLA Unpaid Leave (Share)*. Retrieved 20 December 2018 from Brandeis University, The Heller School, Institute for Child, Youth and Family Policy website: <http://www.diversitydatakids.org/data/ranking/529/working-adults-who-are-eligible-for-and-can-afford-fmla-unpaid-leave-share/#loct=2&cat=44,25&tf=17>; Workers are considered unable to take unpaid FMLA leave because they are either ineligible based on employer size or job tenure requirements or because 32.3 days of lost wages from unpaid leave would result in their family income dropping to or under 200 percent of the federal poverty level.
- 3 U.S. Census Bureau. (2018). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2017, Geographies: All States within United States and Puerto Rico, Table DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics*. Retrieved 20 December 2018, from [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_17\\_1YR\\_DP03&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_17_1YR_DP03&prodType=table)
- 4 Anderson, J. (2016, September 8). *Breadwinner Mothers by Race/Ethnicity and State*. Institute for Women's Policy Research Publication. Retrieved 20 December 2018, from <https://iwpr.org/publications/breadwinner-mothers-by-raceethnicity-and-state/>; "Key breadwinner" means a single mother who heads a household or a married mother who contributes 40 percent or more of the couple's joint earnings. Nationally, 81 percent of Black mothers are key breadwinners; 67 percent of Native American mothers are key breadwinners; 60 percent of mothers identifying as multiracial or "other" race are key breadwinners; 53 percent of Latina mothers are key breadwinners; 50 percent of white mothers are key breadwinners; and 44 percent of Asian mothers are key breadwinners.
- 5 See note 3; Institute for Women's Policy Research. (2018). *Status of Women in the States*. Retrieved 20 December 2018, from <https://statusofwomensdata.org/state-data/>
- 6 Heilman, B., Cole, G., Matos, K., Hassink, A., Mincy, R., & Barker, G. (2016). *State of America's Fathers*. Retrieved 20 December 2018, from MenCare Advocacy website: [https://men-care.org/soaf/download/PRO16001\\_Americas\\_Father\\_web.pdf](https://men-care.org/soaf/download/PRO16001_Americas_Father_web.pdf); Livingston, G. (2018, January 8). *Most dads say they spend too little time with their children, about a quarter live apart from them*. Pew Research Center Publication. Retrieved 20 December 2018, from <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/01/08/most-dads-say-they-spend-too-little-time-with-their-children-about-a-quarter-live-apart-from-them/>
- 7 U.S. Department of Labor. (2015, September 4). *The Cost of Doing Nothing: The Price We All Pay Without Paid Leave Policies to Support America's 21st Century Working Families*. Retrieved 20 December 2018, from <https://www.dol.gov/wb/resources/cost-of-doing-nothing.pdf>
- 8 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2018). *Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population in states by sex and intermediate age, Preliminary 2017 annual averages*. Retrieved 20 December 2018, from <https://www.bls.gov/lau/ex14tables.htm> (Unpublished calculation by the National Partnership for Women & Families)
- 9 U.S. Census Bureau. (2017). *American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates 2016, Geographies: All States within United States and Puerto Rico, Table S0101: Age and Sex*. Retrieved 24 January 2018, from [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_16\\_1YR\\_S0101&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_16_1YR_S0101&prodType=table); University of Virginia Demographics Research Group. (2016, May). *National Population Projections: Projections for the 50 States and D.C.* Retrieved 24 January 2018, from <http://demographics.coopercenter.org/national-population-projections/?q=demographics/national-population-projections> (Unpublished calculation based on projected rate of growth of older adult population from 2016 to 2030)
- 10 National Partnership for Women & Families. (2017, June). *Our Aging, Caring Nation: Why a U.S. Paid Leave Plan Must Provide More Than Time to Care for New Children*. Retrieved 20 December 2018, from <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/caregivingreport>
- 11 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (2018, December 19). *Drug Overdose Deaths, Number and age-adjusted rates of drug overdose deaths by state, US 2017*. Retrieved 20 December 2018, from <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/statedeaths.html>
- 12 See note 8. (Unpublished calculation by the National Partnership for Women & Families of the difference in labor force participation rates for adult women and men by age category)
- 13 See note 7.
- 14 diversitydatakids.org. (2018). *Full-Year Working Adults Ages 21-64 Living in Families Estimated to be Below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line After Wage Loss Due to 12 Weeks of Paid/Unpaid Family or Medical Leave (Share)*. Retrieved 20 December 2018 from Brandeis University, The Heller School, Institute for Child, Youth and Family Policy website <http://www.diversitydatakids.org/data/ranking/670/full-year-working-adults-ages-21-64-living-in-families-estimated-to-be-below-200/#loct=2&cat=54,25&tf=21&ch=132,133,134> (Unpublished calculation by the National Partnership for Women & Families)

The National Partnership for Women & Families is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, access to quality health care and policies that help women and men meet the dual demands of work and family. More information is available at [NationalPartnership.org](http://NationalPartnership.org).

© 2019 National Partnership for Women & Families. All rights reserved.