

THE RAISING OF AMERICA: **ACTIVIST TOOLKIT**

How to Use the *FREE* Streaming Period (February 1-15, 2016) to Make an Impact

WHY IS THIS FILM IMPORTANT?

The Raising of America can help you change the conversation about why some children in the United States thrive while others struggle. (Hint: The solution includes paid leave!) The film raises important questions about the ways we think about raising children, public policy, and the price we are paying as a nation by not addressing families' most basic needs. Personal stories, scientific evidence and political realities come together to make it clear that it's time to stop placing the crux of the conversation about child development in this country on parents making "right" or "wrong" choices. This guide will help you use *The Raising of America* as a powerful conversation starter with family, friends, co-workers and even elected officials.

USING THE FILM TO ADVANCE PAID LEAVE: **WHAT YOU CAN DO**

- ▶ **Watch and discuss the film with your friends and family:** Some of the most powerful changes start with simple conversations. Gather your friends and family to watch *The Raising of America* during the free streaming period. Then, talk about the ways access to paid family and medical leave would help the families in the film.
- ▶ **Organize a screening in your community:** Work with a community center, religious institution, school, library, advocacy organization or your city council to schedule a screening and discussion of the film. Raising awareness of the issues and policies the film includes, especially among local leaders, can help fuel concrete change.
- ▶ **Talk about the importance of paid family and medical leave:** Think about the impact having paid leave can have – or already has had – on you, your family, a co-worker or a friend, and the impossible choices people without it are forced to make. Use the conversation starters included here (*right*).
- ▶ **Call your members of Congress and urge them to support the Family And Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act (H.R. 1439/S.786).** The FAMILY Act would create a national paid family and medical leave program that would guarantee people paid time off when serious illnesses or injuries arise or new children arrive – no matter where they live or work or what jobs they hold.
 - ▶ **Make sure your representative gets the message:** When you leave a message for a member of Congress, be sure to include your full name, your address (at minimum, your city and state) and a way that the office can contact you.

Conversation Starters: Why America Needs National Paid Family and Medical Leave

- ▶ Mothers should be able to take time to recover from childbirth, and mothers and fathers should be able to bond with their new child without worrying about losing a job or their family's economic security.
- ▶ Some parents without paid family leave don't even have a full week to care for and bond with a new child before they have to return to work.
- ▶ When an elderly parent falls ill, adult children should not have to worry about being fired if they need to take time off to help with recovery or hospice care.
- ▶ When a person is diagnosed with a serious illness or is in a serious accident, that person should not have to worry about job loss.

- ▶ **Here's what you need to know about the FAMILY Act:** The FAMILY Act would provide workers with up to 12 weeks of partially paid leave when they need it for their own serious health condition, including pregnancy and childbirth; the serious health condition of a child, parent, spouse or domestic partner; the birth or adoption of a child; and/or for particular military caregiving and leave purposes. The program would be funded through small employee and employer payroll deductions, rather than putting the full cost of providing paid leave on employers. It's modeled on successful state programs and reflects the needs of our changing workforce. For more information, visit NationalPartnership.org/theFAMILYAct.

Find Your Elected Officials:

- ▶ **National:** Visit www.usa.gov/elected-officials or call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121.
- ▶ **State:** Visit <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/state-legislatures.html>.
- ▶ **Local:** Visit your county's or city's local website or city hall.

- ▶ **Sample voicemail to a member of Congress:** "Hello, my name is [*first and last name*] and I live in [*city, state*]. My phone number is [*XXX-XXX-XXXX*]. I'm calling to make sure you support the Family And Medical Insurance Leave Act, also known as the FAMILY Act (S.786/H.R. 1439), which would create a national *paid* family and medical leave program. As your constituent, this issue really matters to me because [*list one key reason*]. Thank you."

- ▶ **Send an email to your members of Congress urging them to support the FAMILY Act.** Just visit NationalPartnership.org/FAMILYAct – and encourage others to do the same!
- ▶ **Don't forget Facebook and Twitter.** Social media can be a powerful way to get the attention of your members of Congress. You can tweet directly at them at WeTweet.org/Film. Just enter your zip code and then send a pre-written message telling them that you watched the film and you're counting on them to support the FAMILY Act. And on November 17, join a national day of action using #RaisingofAmerica. You can also share your thoughts and the link to the film on Facebook.
- ▶ **Urge your state and local lawmakers to support or introduce paid family and medical leave proposals.** Only a handful of states have taken action to guarantee paid leave, but campaigns are underway. See what's happening in your state here: NationalPartnership.org/FFA.
- ▶ **Share your story.** Has not having paid family or medical leave impacted you, your family or a loved one? Can you take paid leave through a state paid family leave program or through your employer? Has having paid leave kept you from experiencing serious financial hardship? Email workstories@nationalpartnership.org to share your story.

Additional questions? Contact Christine Sloane at csloane@nationalpartnership.org to learn more about paid family and medical leave and the FAMILY Act, how you can get involved in state or local campaigns, and additional ways you can take action in your community. And visit RaisingofAmerica.org/Raising-America for various clips of the film, additional resources and a discussion guide.