

June 29, 2016

Dear Member of Congress,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and the tens of millions of working families we represent, we **urge you to become a co-sponsor of the Family And Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act (S. 786/H.R. 1439)**. The FAMILY Act would create a national family and medical leave insurance program that would strengthen the workforce, families, businesses and our economy. **The FAMILY Act is modeled on successful and effective state paid leave laws and would help working women and men meet their caregiving demands while reducing economic inequality and improving economic opportunities for all.**

**In America today, basic access to paid family and medical leave depends on winning the “boss lottery” and too many women and men are losing.** A mere 13 percent of workers in the United States have access to paid family leave through their employers, and fewer than 40 percent have access to personal medical leave through an employer-provided temporary disability program.<sup>1</sup> Just 50 percent of new mothers take even a few paid days away from their jobs to care for a new child.<sup>2</sup> And lower-wage workers and workers of color are even less likely to have basic access to paid leave,<sup>3</sup> yet they are often most in need of financial resources when a family or medical need arises.

**The American people want to have strong families, to be good parents, and to have a job and succeed at it, but they are too often forced to choose one of these priorities over another – and that weakens the entire country.** We can do better, and we can be stronger.

**The FAMILY Act would create a national paid family and medical leave insurance program.**

Employees would earn a portion of their wages for a limited period of time (up to 60 workdays, or 12 workweeks in a year) to address their own serious health issue, including pregnancy or childbirth; to deal with the serious health issue of a family member; to care for a new child; and/or for specific military caregiving and leave purposes. Employees and employers would contribute a small amount in each pay period to a self-sustaining fund, administered through a new Office of Paid Family and Medical Leave. Fund contributions would cover both benefits and administrative costs. Eligibility rules would allow younger, part-time, low-wage and contingent workers to contribute and benefit, regardless of their employer’s size or their length of time on the job.

**The FAMILY Act will mean a stronger workforce.** Many women and men today are both breadwinners and caregivers, and paid time off for family and medical purposes helps workers – particularly women – stay and succeed in their jobs and receive higher wages over time.<sup>4</sup>

**The FAMILY Act will help to bring the United States in line with the rest of the world.** The United States is one of just two countries in the world that do not guarantee paid maternity leave to new mothers,<sup>5</sup> one of five highly competitive countries that do not guarantee paid parental leave to new fathers,<sup>6</sup> and the only highly competitive country that does not guarantee paid medical leave for serious illness.<sup>7</sup>

**The FAMILY Act will strengthen the economic security of working people and their families.** Paid leave provides income stability for working people and families at critical moments in their lives. Paid leave also promotes financial independence, especially for growing families. In the year following a birth, new mothers and fathers who take paid leave are less likely than parents who do not to need public assistance.<sup>8</sup>

**The FAMILY Act will mean improved health outcomes for all.** New mothers who take paid leave are more likely to take the amount of time recommended by doctors,<sup>9</sup> and their children are more likely to be breastfed, receive medical check-ups and get critical immunizations.<sup>10</sup> An additional 10 weeks of paid leave for new parents, on average, reduces post-neonatal mortality by up to 4.5 percent.<sup>11</sup> The presence of a parent shortens a child's hospital stay by 31 percent.<sup>12</sup> And active parental involvement in a child's hospital care may head off future health care needs and costs, which is particularly true for children with chronic health conditions.<sup>13</sup> Paid leave enables people to help older family members with health problems recover from illness, fulfill treatment plans, and avoid complications and hospital readmissions.<sup>14</sup>

**The FAMILY Act will strengthen businesses.** Paid leave reduces turnover costs and increases employee loyalty. Companies typically pay about one-fifth of an employee's salary to replace that employee.<sup>15</sup> In California, where a successful family leave insurance program exists, workers in low-wage, high-turnover industries are much more likely to return to their jobs after using the state's program.<sup>16</sup> Establishing a national standard would also level the playing field for businesses that want to provide paid leave but currently cannot afford to do so.

**The FAMILY Act will strengthen Social Security.** Paid leave safeguards the income and retirement security of workers while complementing Social Security. Currently, 48 percent of family caregivers who have to take time off to meet caregiving responsibilities lose income when they do so.<sup>17</sup> On average, a worker who is 50 years of age or older who leaves the workforce to take care of a parent will lose more than \$300,000 in wages and retirement income.<sup>18</sup> By keeping new parents, workers with medical conditions and family caregivers attached to the workforce and paying taxes, a national paid family and medical leave insurance program would strengthen existing social insurance programs.

**The FAMILY Act builds on successful state family and medical leave insurance programs.** Family leave insurance programs have existed in California since 2004, New Jersey since 2009 and Rhode Island since 2014. Analyses of California's law show that both employers and employees benefit from the program.<sup>19</sup> In New Jersey, the program costs are even lower than expected and public attitudes toward the program are favorable.<sup>20</sup> Preliminary analysis of Rhode Island's first year also shows favorable results.<sup>21</sup>

**It is well past time for policies that truly honor families.** That is why we need a law that guarantees that people can care for themselves and their loved ones no matter where they live, what job they have or who they work for. The FAMILY Act is that law. We urge you to sponsor this critically important legislation today.

Sincerely,

## **National Organizations**

9to5, National Association for Working Women  
A Better Balance  
Advancing Women Professionals and the Jewish Community  
Advocates for Youth  
African American Ministers in Action  
African American Ministers Leadership Council (AAMLC)  
African American Religious Affairs (AARA)  
Alliance for Children and Families  
Alliance for Justice  
Alzheimer's Foundation of America  
American Association of University Women (AAUW)  
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)  
American Medical Women's Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Public Health Association  
Association of Flight Attendants - CWA  
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (ARHP)  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses  
Baby Cafe USA, Inc.  
Baby-Friendly USA, Inc.  
Bend the Arc: A Jewish Partnership for Justice  
Black Women's Roundtable of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation  
Breastfeeding USA  
Caring Across Generations  
Caring Economy Campaign, Center for Partnership Studies  
Catalyst  
Center for American Progress Action Fund  
Center for Community Change Action  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
Center for Parental Leave Leadership  
Center for Popular Democracy  
Center for Reproductive Rights  
Center for the Study of Social Policy  
Center for Working Families  
Center for Women Policy Studies  
Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS)  
Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW)  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Commission on Social Action on Reform Judaism  
Common Sense Kids Action  
Communications Workers of America  
Communications Workers of America, National Women's Committee  
Demos

Evangelicals for Social Action  
Faith in Public Life  
Family Equality Council  
Family Values @ Work  
Feminist Majority  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Food Chain Workers Alliance  
Girls, Inc.  
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.  
HealthConnect One  
Human Rights Campaign  
Human Rights Watch  
Institute for Science and Human Values, Inc.  
Interfaith Worker Justice  
International Brotherhood of Teamsters  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
Jewish Women International  
Jobs With Justice  
Justice and Witness Ministries of the United Church of Christ  
League of United Latin American Citizens  
Legal Momentum  
Main Street Alliance  
Make it Work Campaign  
Mi Familia Vota  
Mom-mentum  
MomsRising  
Ms. Foundation for Women  
NARAL Pro-Choice America  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National Alliance for Caregiving  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum  
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)  
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health  
National Center for Lesbian Rights  
National Congress of Black Women  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Employment Law Project  
National Employment Lawyers Association  
National Hispanic Council on Aging  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health  
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund  
National Network of Abortion Funds  
National Organization for Women (NOW)  
National Partnership for Women & Families

National Respite Coalition  
National Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Association  
National Women's Law Center  
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby  
OUR Walmart  
OWL-The Voice of Women 40+  
People For the American Way  
PHI - Quality Care through Quality Jobs  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice  
Restaurant Opportunities Center United  
RESULTS  
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights  
UltraViolet  
Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation  
United States Breastfeeding Committee (USBC)  
United States Women's Chamber of Commerce  
United Steelworkers  
UniteWomen  
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity  
USAction  
Voter Participation Center  
Wellstart International  
Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW)  
Women Employed  
Women's Information Network  
Women's Media Center  
Working America  
Working Families Organization  
Young Invincibles  
YWCA USA  
ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families

**Alabama**

UniteWomen Alabama

**Alaska**

Alaska Breastfeeding Coalition  
UniteWomen Alaska

**Arizona**

UniteWomen Arizona

**Arkansas**

UniteWomen Arkansas

**California**

9to5 California

Before and After Baby

BreastfeedLA

California Breastfeeding Coalition

California Women's Law Center

Equal Rights Advocates

Hearthstone Midwifery & Lactation Services

Legal Aid Society-Employment Law Center

National Council of Jewish Women, California State Policy Advocacy Network

Parent Voices

Restaurant Opportunities Center of Los Angeles

Restaurant Opportunities Center of the Bay Area

UniteWomen California

YWCA of Watsonville

**Colorado**

13th Moon Midwifery

9to5 Colorado

Boulder County Breastfeeding Coalition

Colorado American College of Nurse Midwives

Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition

Colorado Center on Law and Policy

Colorado Fiscal Institute

Colorado Lactation Consultant Association

Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR)

Colorado Progressive Coalition

UniteWomen Colorado

**Connecticut**

Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition

Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women

Connecticut Working Families Party

UniteWomen Connecticut

YWCA Hartford Region

**Delaware**

Breastfeeding Coalition of Delaware

UniteWomen Delaware

**District of Columbia**

DC Working Families  
District of Columbia Breastfeeding Coalition  
District of Columbia Employment Justice Center  
Restaurant Opportunities Center of Washington, D.C.  
UniteWomen District of Columbia

**Florida**

Central Florida Jobs with Justice  
Communications Workers of America Local 3108  
Farmworker Association of Florida  
Florida Consumer Action Network  
Florida Institute for Reform and Empowerment  
Florida Main Street Alliance  
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, Central Florida  
Mi Familia Vota Education Fund - Florida  
National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Miami Section  
Organize Now  
Palm Beach County Chapter, National Organization for Women  
Restaurant Opportunities Center of Florida  
South Florida Voices for Working Families  
United Faculty of Florida - New College of Florida Chapter  
United Faculty of Florida - Florida International University Chapter  
UniteWomen Florida

**Georgia**

9to5 Georgia  
Georgia Rural Urban Summit  
Southeastern Lactation Consultants Association (SELCA)  
UniteWomen Georgia

**Hawaii**

Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women  
Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Hawaii  
UniteWomen Hawaii  
YWCA Of Oahu

**Idaho**

UniteWomen Idaho  
United Action for Idaho

**Illinois**

AIDS Foundation of Chicago  
Arise Chicago

Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Inc.  
Citizen Action Illinois  
EverThrive Illinois  
National Council of Jewish Women, Chicago North Shore Section  
ParentsWork  
Project IRENE  
Restaurant Opportunities Center of Chicago  
UniteWomen Illinois  
YWCA McLean County  
YWCA of the University of Illinois

**Indiana**

Indiana Institute for Working Families  
UniteWomen Indiana

**Iowa**

Iowa American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)  
Iowa Citizen Action Network  
Iowa Council 61, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)  
Iowa Main Street Alliance  
UniteWomen Iowa  
YWCA Ames-ISU

**Kansas**

Communities Creating Opportunity  
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc.  
UniteWomen Kansas

**Kentucky**

East Kentucky Women's Care Collective  
Eastern Kentucky Breastfeeding Coalition  
UniteWomen Kentucky

**Louisiana**

Greater New Orleans Breastfeeding Awareness Coalition  
National Council of Jewish Women Greater New Orleans Section  
Restaurant Opportunities Center of New Orleans  
UniteWomen Louisiana

**Maine**

Maine People's Alliance  
Maine Women's Lobby

UniteWomen Maine

**Maryland**

Job Opportunities Task Force  
Maryland Working Families  
Progressive Maryland  
Public Justice Center  
UniteWomen Maryland

**Massachusetts**

Coalition for Social Justice  
Greater Boston Legal Services  
Jewish Alliance for Law & Social Action  
Massachusetts Breastfeeding Coalition  
Massachusetts Paid Leave Coalition  
New England United For Justice  
Restaurant Opportunities Center of New England  
UniteWomen Massachusetts

**Michigan**

Michigan Citizen Action  
Michigan Council of YWCA's  
Michigan League for Public Policy  
Restaurant Opportunities Center of Michigan  
UniteWomen Michigan

**Minnesota**

TakeAction Minnesota  
UniteWomen Minnesota

**Mississippi**

UniteWomen Mississippi

**Missouri**

National Council of Jewish Women - St. Louis Section  
Parents as Teachers  
St. Louis Breastfeeding Coalition  
UniteWomen Missouri

**Montana**

The Arc Montana  
UniteWomen Montana

**Nebraska**

UniteWomen Nebraska  
Voices for Children in Nebraska

**Nevada**

UniteWomen Nevada

**New Hampshire**

New Hampshire Citizens Alliance  
UniteWomen New Hampshire

**New Jersey**

American Federation of Teachers New Jersey  
Family Voices New Jersey  
La Casa de Don Pedro  
National Council of Jewish Women, Essex County Section  
National Council of Jewish Women, New Jersey State Policy Advocacy Network  
National Council of Jewish Women, Union County NJ Section  
New Jersey Chapter, National Organization of Women  
New Jersey Citizen Action  
New Jersey Policy Perspective  
New Jersey State Industrial Union Council  
New Jersey Tenants Organization  
New Jersey Working Families Alliance  
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network  
UniteWomen New Jersey

**New Mexico**

Restaurant Opportunities Center of Albuquerque  
UniteWomen New Mexico

**New York**

ALIGN: The Alliance for a Greater New York  
Brooklyn Postpartum  
Citizen Action of New York  
Community Service Society of New York  
ECE PolicyWorks  
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition  
ImmerseNYC  
National Council of Jewish Women, New York State Policy Advocacy Network  
National Council of Jewish Women, Peninsula section  
New York Paid Family Leave Insurance Campaign  
New York Paid Leave Coalition  
New York Working Families Party  
Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York

UniteWomen New York  
Worksites for Wellness, Inc.  
YWCA of Binghamton and Broome County  
YWCA of Rochester & Monroe County

**North Carolina**

AAUW North Carolina  
Action NC  
National Association of Social Workers, NC Chapter  
NC Women United  
North Carolina A. Philip Randolph Institute, Inc.  
North Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition  
North Carolina Council of Churches  
North Carolina Justice Center  
North Carolina Working America  
UniteWomen North Carolina  
Women AdvanCe

**North Dakota**

North Dakota Women's Network  
UniteWomen North Dakota

**Ohio**

Innovation Ohio  
Ohio Main Street Alliance  
Progress Ohio  
UniteWomen Ohio  
YWCA Steubenville  
YWCA Warren

**Oklahoma**

UniteWomen Oklahoma

**Oregon**

Breastfeeding Coalition of Oregon  
Family Forward Oregon  
Oregon Action  
UniteWomen Oregon

**Pennsylvania**

Beaver Valley NOW  
Keystone Progress  
National Council of Jewish Women - Pennsylvania Policy Advocate  
PathWays PA

Pennsylvania Breastfeeding Coalition  
Pennsylvania Working Families  
Restaurant Opportunities Center of Philadelphia  
Southwestern Pennsylvania Coalition of Labor Union Women  
The Women and Girls Foundation of Southwest Pennsylvania  
UniteWomen Pennsylvania  
Women's Law Project

**Rhode Island**

UniteWomen Rhode Island

**South Carolina**

YWCA Of the Upper Lowlands, Inc.  
UniteWomen South Carolina

**South Dakota**

UniteWomen South Dakota

**Tennessee**

National Council of Jewish Women, Tennessee State Policy Advocacy Network  
Tennessee Citizen Action  
UniteWomen Tennessee

**Texas**

National Council of Jewish Women, Texas State Policy Advocacy Network  
Realize Our Potential  
Texas Breastfeeding Coalition  
UniteWomen Texas

**Utah**

The Utah Breastfeeding Coalition  
UniteWomen Utah

**Vermont**

Community of Vermont Elders  
Hunger Free Vermont  
UniteWomen Vermont  
Vermont Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals, Local 5221  
Vermont Peace & Justice Center  
Voices for Vermont's Children

**Virginia**

UniteWomen Virginia  
Virginia Breastfeeding Task Force

## Virginia Organizing

### Washington

Legal Voice

UniteWomen Washington

Washington Community Action Network

Washington State Labor Council, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)

YWCA of Spokane

### West Virginia

UniteWomen West Virginia

West Virginia Breastfeeding Alliance

West Virginia Citizen Action Group

### Wisconsin

9to5 Wisconsin

Citizen Action of Wisconsin

Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups

Mid-Day Women's Alliance

Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition

UniteWomen Wisconsin

Urban Underground

Wisconsin Jobs Now

Wisconsin Working Families Party

### Wyoming

UniteWomen Wyoming

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