

June 28, 2017

Dear Members of Congress:

On behalf of the more than 340 undersigned organizations and the tens of millions of working families we represent, we urge you to stand with working families across the nation by committing to **support a strong, responsible national paid family and medical leave policy and reject harmful alternatives.**

The United States needs a national paid family and medical leave plan to provide essential support and create opportunity for all working people and families, to help ensure that people can take the time they need to address serious health issues, to promote a more level playing field for businesses of all sizes and to strengthen our national economy.

Policy details matter tremendously. Disparities in access to leave, changing demographics and the realities working families face today require that any meaningful national plan be comprehensive and inclusive. Responsible governance requires that any plan be affordable, cost-effective and sustainably funded with new revenue, not with cuts to existing programs. Any plan that fails to meet these tests – and especially one that does so in the context of a budget proposal that would do irreparable damage to the health, nutrition, income stability and well-being of millions of people across the country – is unacceptable. Paid leave in name only will serve no one.

**The paid parental leave proposal included in the Trump administration’s FY 2018 budget is unacceptable, both on its face and in the context of a devastatingly draconian budget.**

The Trump budget proposes to require states to provide six weeks of paid leave to parents caring for newborn or newly adopted children. The proposal is inadequate and unworkable for the following reasons:

- It excludes more than 75 percent of people in this country who take family or medical leave not to care for new babies or newly adopted children, but to care for family members with serious illnesses, injuries or disabilities or for their own serious health issue.<sup>1</sup>
- It would put severe stress on an already fragile unemployment insurance (UI) program, threaten to impose further cuts in existing UI benefits or higher taxes on employers to make UI funds more solvent, and could seriously undermine access to state UI benefits when the next recession hits.
- It would likely incorporate unacceptably restrictive UI eligibility rules and unacceptably low UI benefit levels, which would make leave inaccessible or unaffordable for many workers who need time to care, rather than setting inclusive and meaningful national baselines.
- It provides just six weeks of leave, rather than the 12-week minimum that the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) established for unpaid leave more than 24 years ago; a new national program should not diminish an existing national standard.

**Establishing a real national paid family and medical leave standard is crucial.** Today, just 14 percent of the workforce in the United States has access to paid family leave through an employer, and less than 40 percent has access to personal medical leave through an employer's temporary disability insurance program.<sup>2</sup> Access rates for workers in lower-wage jobs are much lower, and recent private sector advances are disproportionately concentrated in higher-skill industries and among higher-paid employees. The benefits of paid family and medical leave for workforce attachment, economic stability and individual, family, and public health are well-documented.

**It is well past time for the United States to adopt a nationwide paid family and medical leave standard, and not just any plan will do.** A strong, responsible paid leave policy must:

- **Apply to everyone on a nationwide basis**, no matter where people live, where they work or what job they hold.
- **Include all of the well-established reasons people need paid leave** – to care for new children or seriously ill or injured family members including aging loved ones, to address their own serious health condition, or to address military care needs.
- **Offer substantial benefits** so that lower- and middle-wage workers can afford to take the paid family and medical leave available to them.
- **Provide a reasonable duration of leave** that matches or exceeds the 12-week precedent established by the FMLA, the nation's unpaid leave law.
- **Protect workers** from adverse employment consequences for using paid leave.
- **Be sustainably and responsibly funded**, without making unacceptable and harmful cuts or adding barriers to access to other essential programs, including but not limited to Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), UI or other programs that serve millions of people across the country.

**Successful state programs have shown what works.** Paid family and medical leave insurance programs have existed in California since 2004, New Jersey since 2009 and Rhode Island since 2014. Strong new programs will take effect in New York in 2018 and in the District of Columbia in 2020. Analyses of California's law show that both employers and employees benefit from the program.<sup>3</sup> In New Jersey, the program costs have been lower than expected and public attitudes toward the program are favorable.<sup>4</sup> Early research on Rhode Island's program found positive effects for new parents, and a majority of small- and medium-sized employers were in favor of the program one year after it took effect.<sup>5</sup> California, New Jersey and Rhode Island have all had financially sound programs and are all exploring ways to make them more accessible.

**National paid family and medical leave insurance has broad support from voters across party lines.** Supermajorities of voters across party lines support a comprehensive, 12-week national paid family and medical leave law, including 66 percent of Republicans, 77 percent of independents, and 93 percent of Democrats. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of voters say they would "strongly favor" such a law.<sup>6</sup>

**Seven in 10 small business owners support national paid family and medical leave**

**insurance.** A national, scientific survey found that 70 percent of small business owners and operators support legislation to establish a national paid family and medical leave insurance program funded by modest contributions from both employees and employers.<sup>7</sup> Small business owners report that this paid leave policy would help level the playing field with large corporations, improve worker retention, productivity and morale, and protect small business owners' economic security in the event of an accident or medical emergency.<sup>8</sup>

**Americans want and need paid leave for elder care, self-care and family members with**

**serious health conditions.** The majority of parents, adult children and spouses who provide care for ill family members or children with disabilities also having paying jobs; half of those who do have paying jobs are working full time in addition to their caregiving responsibilities.<sup>9</sup> The majority of military caregivers – and more than three-quarters of caregivers for post-9/11 wounded warriors – are also in the labor force.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the number of aging adults who need care will only continue to increase. By 2060, the number of people at or above retirement age in the United States is expected to double.<sup>11</sup>

America's lack of paid family and medical leave has serious costs – for women's workforce advancement and income, working people's economic and retirement security, the health and well-being of children and older adults who need care, and business retention and recruitment. It also strains taxpayer-funded safety net programs and deprives the nation of new tax revenue that would come from women's improved wages and the greater productivity that would come from increases in women's workforce participation.

**It is well past time to truly support working people and families with a strong national paid family and medical leave policy.**

We urge you to support strong, inclusive national paid family and medical leave legislation and reject inadequate proposals that would fail to meet the needs of the nation's workforce, families or businesses – and that would do more harm than good.

Sincerely,

**National Organizations**

- 1,000 Days
- 9to5, National Association of Working Women
- A Better Balance
- ACRIA
- African American Ministers In Action (AAMIA)
- Amalgamated Bank
- American Academy of Nursing
- American Civil Liberties Union
- American Family Voices
- American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)
- American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
- American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO
- American Psychological Association
- American Public Health Association
- American Sustainable Business Council

Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)  
The Arc of the United States  
Asset Building Strategies  
Association of Flight Attendants  
Association of University Centers on Disabilities  
The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Bend the Arc Jewish Action  
Black Women's Roundtable  
Caring Across Generations  
Center for American Progress  
Center for Global Policy Solutions  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
Center for Medicare Advocacy  
Center for Popular Democracy  
Center for Southeast Asians  
ChangeLab Solutions  
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation  
Coalition of Labor Union Women  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Common Sense Kids Action  
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces  
Demos  
Economic Opportunity Institute  
Equal Exchange  
Equal Pay Today!  
Equal Rights Advocates  
Every Child Matters  
Family Values @ Work  
Feminist Majority Foundation  
Food & Water Watch  
Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.  
Human Rights Campaign  
Human Rights Watch  
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda  
InkHouse  
Institute for Science and Human Values  
Interfaith Worker Justice  
Jewish Women International (JWI)  
Jobs With Justice  
Justice in Aging  
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement  
Labor Project for Working Families  
Latinos for a Secure Retirement  
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
League of Women Voters of the United States  
Main Street Alliance  
Make It Work  
Mi Familia Vota  
Mom2Mom Global

MomsRising.org  
Movement Advancement Project  
Ms. Foundation for Women  
NARAL Pro-Choice America  
National Abortion Federation  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)  
National Association for Rural Mental Health  
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors  
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health  
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)  
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators  
National Center for Lesbian Rights  
National Center for Transgender Equality  
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
National Coalition for the Homeless  
National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care  
National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW)  
National Council of La Raza  
National Disability Rights Network  
National Domestic Workers Alliance  
National Education Association (NEA)  
National Employment Law Project  
National Employment Lawyers Association  
National Hispanic Council on Aging  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Institute for Reproductive Health  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health  
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund  
National Network to End Domestic Violence  
National Organization for Women  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence  
National WIC Association  
National Women's Law Center  
National Working Positive Coalition  
Oxfam America  
Paralyzed Veterans of America  
Partnership for America's Children  
Patagonia  
People For the American Way  
People's Action  
PHI  
Physicians for Reproductive Health  
PICO National Network  
PL+US: Paid Leave for the United States  
Positive Women's Network – United States of America

Project Inform  
Promundo-US  
Public Advocacy for Kids  
Restaurant Opportunities Centers United (ROC United)  
RESULTS  
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
Sierra Club  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas  
Social Security Works  
State Innovation Exchange  
Sugar Law Center for Economic & Social Justice  
TASH  
U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce  
UltraViolet  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation  
United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW)  
The United State of Women  
United States Breastfeeding Committee  
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity  
The Voter Participation Center  
Women Employed  
Women's Voices Women Vote Action Fund  
Working Families Party  
Workplace Fairness  
Young Invincibles  
YWCA USA  
ZERO TO THREE

**Alabama**

AIDS Alabama  
National Association of Social Workers, Alabama Chapter

**Arizona**

American Association of University Women (AAUW), Tucson Branch  
Arizona AFL-CIO  
Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence  
Child and Family Resources, Inc.  
Healthy Families, Healthy Workplaces Coalition  
NARAL Pro-Choice Arizona  
Pima Area Labor Federation  
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Arizona  
Southwest Center for Economic Integrity

**California**

9to5 California  
Association of CA Caregiver Resource Centers

BreastfeedLA  
California Breastfeeding Coalition  
California Child Care Resource & Referral Network  
California Women's Law Center  
California Work & Family Coalition  
Child Care Law Center  
Clergy & Laity United For Economic Justice (CLUE)  
LAANE  
Legal Aid at Work  
National Council of Jewish Women, California  
National Council of Jewish Women, Los Angeles Section  
National Council of Jewish Women, Sacramento Section  
Our Family Coalition, LGBTQ Families USA  
Women's Foundation of California  
YWCA Berkeley/Oakland  
YWCA Glendale  
YWCA Pasadena-Foothill Valley  
YWCA San Francisco & Marin  
YWCA Silicon Valley

### **Colorado**

9to5 Colorado  
Almost Home, Inc.  
La Plata County Thrive! Living Wage Coalition  
National Council of Jewish Women, Colorado State Policy Advocate

### **Connecticut**

All Our Kin  
Connecticut Working Families Party  
CT Campaign for Paid Family Leave  
NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut  
National Association of Social Workers, Connecticut Chapter

### **District of Columbia**

Bright Start Early Care & Preschool  
Jews United for Justice

### **Delaware**

Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families

### **Florida**

Central Florida Jobs with Justice  
Florida Alliance of Community Development Corporations, Inc.  
Jacksonville Area National Organization for Women  
Lake Community Action Agency  
National Council of Jewish Women, Florida State Policy Advocate  
National Council of Jewish Women, Florida Vice State Policy Advocate  
National Council of Jewish Women, Sarasota/Manatee Section

**Georgia**

9to5 Georgia  
Atlanta Women for Equality

**Hawaii**

Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women  
YWCA O'ahu

**Illinois**

Illinois Hunger Coalition  
National Council of Jewish Women, South Cook Section State Policy Advocacy Committee  
North/Northwest Suburban Illinois National Organization for Women  
Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry  
Project IRENE  
YWCA Elgin  
YWCA McLean County  
YWCA of the University of Illinois

**Indiana**

Indiana Institute for Working Families  
YWCA Evansville

**Iowa**

COASAP  
YWCA Ames-ISU

**Kansas**

KANZA Mental Health and Guidance Center, Inc.  
YWCA Northeast Kansas

**Kentucky**

Kentucky Equal Justice Center

**Louisiana**

Greater Light Ministries  
Louisiana State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program  
Louvis Services, Inc.  
NAMI New Orleans  
National Association of Social Workers, Louisiana Chapter  
Shelter Resources, Inc. d.b.a. Belle Reve New Orleans  
YWCA Greater Baton Rouge

**Maine**

Maine Center for Economic Policy  
Maine Women's Lobby  
National Council of Jewish Women, Maine  
YWCA Mount Desert Island



**Maryland**

AIDS Action Baltimore  
Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore  
Job Opportunities Task Force  
Maryland National Organization for Women  
Maryland United for Peace and Justice  
Out for Justice, Inc.  
PeterCares House  
Public Justice Center  
Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition

**Massachusetts**

American Friends Service Committee, Cambridge Office  
Greater Boston Legal Services  
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute  
YWCA Boston  
YWCA Cambridge  
YWCA Central Massachusetts  
YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts

**Michigan**

Michigan League for Public Policy  
National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Detroit Section  
Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Justice Team  
YWCA Kalamazoo  
YWCA of Metropolitan Detroit

**Minnesota**

Children's Defense Fund – Minnesota  
ISALAH  
TakeAction Minnesota  
Women's Foundation of Minnesota  
YWCA Minneapolis

**Mississippi**

Every Mother, Inc.

**Missouri**

Missouri Jobs with Justice  
NARAL Pro-Choice Missouri  
National Council of Jewish Women, St. Louis Section

**Nebraska**

Holland Children's Movement

**New Hampshire**

Campaign for a Family Friendly Economy  
W.S. Badger Company

**New Jersey**

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) – New Jersey  
Anti-Poverty Network of New Jersey  
BlueWaveNJ  
CWA Local 1036  
Family Voices New Jersey  
National Council of Jewish Women, Essex County Section  
National Council of Jewish Women, West Morris Section  
National Organization for Women, New Jersey Chapter  
National Organization for Women, Northern New Jersey Chapter  
New Jersey Citizen Action  
New Jersey Tenants Organization  
New Jersey Time to Care Coalition  
Reform Jewish Voice of New Jersey  
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network

**New Mexico**

Southwest Women's Law Center

**New York**

Children's Defense Fund – New York  
Citizen Action of New York  
Community Resource Exchange  
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition  
LISC New York City  
Masten Block Club Coalition, Inc.  
National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (NFBPWC) - New York City  
New York Paid Leave Coalition  
New York State Breastfeeding Coalition  
Pilgrim-St. Luke's United Church of Christ  
Restaurant Opportunities Centers (ROC) of New York  
YMCA Greater Rochester  
YWCA of Binghamton and Broome County  
YWCA Brooklyn  
YWCA of Rochester and Monroe County

**North Carolina**

National Association of Social Workers, North Carolina Chapter  
NC Child  
Sisters of Mercy South Central Community  
YWCA of Asheville

**North Dakota**

North Dakota Women's Network

**Ohio**

ACTION OHIO Coalition For Battered Women  
Communities United For Action  
Innovation Ohio  
National Coalition of 100 Black Women Central Ohio Chapter  
National Council of Jewish Women, Columbus Section  
National Council of Jewish Women, Ohio State Policy Advocate  
National Organization for Women, Columbus, Ohio Chapter  
Ohio National Organization for Women, Inc.  
Ohio Women's Public Policy Network  
Toledo Area Jobs with Justice & Interfaith Worker Justice Coalition  
Universal Health Care Action Network of Ohio  
YWCA Dayton  
YWCA Warren

### **Oregon**

Cascade AIDS Project  
Family Equality Council  
Family Forward Oregon  
NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon  
Oregon Foundation for Reproductive Health  
YWCA Greater Portland

### **Pennsylvania**

Essential Energy  
National Organization for Women, Southwest Pennsylvania Chapter  
PathWays PA  
Philadelphia Jobs With Justice  
Restaurant Opportunities Centers (ROC) of Pennsylvania  
Westmoreland Community Action  
Women's Law Project  
YWCA Greater Pittsburgh  
YWCA Titusville  
YWCA Tri-County Area

### **Rhode Island**

Economic Progress Institute  
Planned Parenthood Votes! Rhode Island  
Women's Fund of Rhode Island  
YWCA Rhode Island

### **South Carolina**

National Association of Social Workers, South Carolina Chapter

### **Tennessee**

Black Children's Institute of Tennessee

### **Texas**

NARAL Pro-Choice Texas  
National Council of Jewish Women, Texas State Policy Advocates  
YWCA San Antonio

### **Vermont**

National Association of Social Workers, Vermont Chapter  
Voices for Vermont's Children

### **Virginia**

NARAL Pro-Choice Virginia

### **Washington**

Kulshan Community Land Trust  
National Council of Jewish Women, Washington State Policy Advocate  
Washington Community Action Network  
Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO  
YWCA Clark County  
YWCA Olympia  
YWCA Pierce County

### **West Virginia**

Safe Housing and Economic Development, Inc.

### **Wisconsin**

9to5 Wisconsin  
YWCA Madison

### **Wyoming**

Better Wyoming

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