



To: Interested Parties
From: National Partnership for Women & Families
Re: Voters' Willingness to Pay for a National Paid Leave Fund
Date: September 29, 2016

Despite a near universal need for time to address serious family and medical needs, access to paid leave is rare.

Just 14 percent of the U.S. workforce has paid family leave through their employers and less than 40 percent has personal medical leave through an employer's temporary disability program.¹ For low-wage workers, access to paid leave is even more uncommon – and taking unpaid leave is not a realistic option. This is why nearly one-quarter of new moms are back at work within two weeks of giving birth, and why many workers are forced to choose between the jobs they need and the families they love.²

— **National paid family and medical leave is urgently needed**

— **Public paid family and medical leave programs are affordable**

— **A national paid leave fund is supported by the majority of voters**

— **Most voters are willing to help pay for a national paid leave fund**

— **Many voters are willing to pay more than is needed for a national paid leave program**

Paid family and medical leave insurance programs are affordable. Three U.S. states have paid family and medical leave insurance programs – California (since 2004), New Jersey (since 2009) and Rhode Island (since 2014). These programs are funded through payroll deductions of one percent or less of employees' wages and enable workers to receive a portion of their pay for 26 to 52 weeks of personal disability leave and four to six weeks of paid family leave.³ Research among workers in these states has never revealed dissatisfaction with these payroll deductions.

The leading federal proposal – the Family And Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act – is modeled on these successful state insurance programs and would be funded through payroll deductions of far less than one percent. The fund would provide eligible workers with up to 12 weeks of family and medical leave at two-thirds of their typical wages, up to a cap.⁴

National polls show the vast majority of voters support a national paid family and medical leave program. Recent national polling shows that more than three-quarters of likely 2016 voters (76 percent) say they favor a national law that would establish a paid leave program that provides up to 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave through an insurance fund. Six in 10 (61 percent) say they “strongly favor” such a program and support crosses gender, race, partisan affiliation, region and age.⁵

Polls in key states consistently show substantial voter support for a national paid family and medical leave program. Polling of likely general election voters in Colorado, Florida, North Carolina and Ohio found that 80 percent of voters say they favor a paid family and medical leave insurance program that would provide workers some money during up to 12 weeks of leave if they have a new child, serious illness or seriously ill family member.⁶

Additional polling in 15 key states (Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin) also found broad support for a national paid family and medical leave fund, with strong supporters outnumbering strong opponents by more than a two-to-one margin.⁷

Polling in 15 key states shows the majority of voters are willing to contribute to a national paid family and medical leave fund – even more than is needed. The same 15-state poll that found broad support for a national program gauged voters' willingness to contribute a portion of their wages to fund a national paid family and medical leave program that would cover all workers.⁸ It found that:

- ▶ **Among all voters surveyed, including those who support and those who don't support a national paid leave fund, nearly two-thirds (64 percent) said they are willing to contribute to a national paid leave fund – and nearly a majority said they are willing to pay amounts that exceed actual program costs.** Of all the voters surveyed, 12 percent said they would be willing to contribute 5 cents or more for every dollar they are paid – more than five times as much as the contributions required by state paid leave programs; 13 percent said they would be willing to contribute 3 to 5 cents for every dollar they are paid; a plurality (23 percent) said they would be willing to contribute 1 to 3 cents; and 16 percent said they would be willing to contribute less than 1 cent per dollar they are paid, but still something. Just one-third of those surveyed said they did not want to contribute.
- ▶ **Support was even higher – and willingness to pay more substantial amounts more prevalent – among voters who said they support a national paid family and medical leave fund: 86 percent said they are willing to contribute.** Eighteen percent of those surveyed said they would be willing to contribute 5 or more cents for every dollar they are paid; 20 percent said they would be willing to contribute 3 to 5 cents per dollar; a plurality (34 percent) said they would be willing to contribute 1 to 3 cents per dollar, and 14 percent said they would be willing to contribute less than 1 cent per dollar they are paid, but still something. Only 12 percent said they would not be willing to contribute at all.
- ▶ **Voters in lower-, middle- and upper-income households said they would be willing to contribute to a national paid family and medical leave program.** Among voters in the 15 states surveyed, those in lower-income households said they were just as willing to contribute to a national paid leave fund as those in middle- and higher-income households. About two-thirds of voters across every income group said they are willing to contribute something to the fund, and about half of voters across every income group expressed a willingness to pay 1 cent or more for every dollar they are paid – more than the leading proposed national program requires.

VOTERS' WILLINGNESS TO CONTRIBUTE TO A NATIONAL PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE FUND, BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME LEVEL

	Household income less than \$20,000	Household income \$20,000-50,000	Household income \$50,000-75,000	Household income \$75,000-100,000	Household income more than \$100,000
Willing to contribute 1% or more	50%	50%	51%	53%	46%
Willing to contribute something	64%	64%	67%	70%	64%

Source: Public Policy Polling, 15-State Survey, July 2016.

- ▶ **Voters' willingness to pay into a national paid family and medical leave fund is consistent across all 15 states.** Supporters in every state are near universally willing to contribute to a national paid leave fund, and the vast majority are willing to pay more than a program would require.

VOTERS' WILLINGNESS TO CONTRIBUTE TO A NATIONAL PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE FUND, BY STATE

	Ariz.	Colo.	Fla.	Ga.	Iowa	Minn.	N.V.	N.H.	N.C.	Ohio	Ore.	Penn.	Va.	Wash.	Wis.
All voters															
Willing to contribute 1% or more	48%	47%	44%	51%	51%	48%	48%	57%	49%	47%	48%	46%	51%	47%	52%
Willing to contribute something	64%	65%	62%	65%	66%	65%	61%	70%	65%	61%	68%	65%	66%	61%	68%
National paid leave fund supporters															
Willing to contribute 1% or more	71%	74%	65%	77%	74%	74%	75%	83%	67%	67%	76%	70%	77%	75%	79%
Willing to contribute something	86%	87%	82%	89%	90%	91%	85%	93%	83%	81%	90%	86%	89%	87%	90%

Source: Public Policy Polling, 15-State Survey, July 2016.

1 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2016, September). *Employee Benefits in the United States National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States, March 2016* (Tables 32 and 16). Retrieved 27 September 2016, from <http://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2016/ebbl0059.pdf>

2 Klerman, J., Daley, K., & Pozniak, A. (2012, September 7). *Family and Medical Leave in 2012: Technical Report*. Abt Associates Publication. Retrieved 27 September 2016, from <http://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/fmla/FMLA-2012-Technical-Report.pdf>

3 National Partnership for Women & Families. (2016, April). *State Paid Family Leave Insurance Laws*. Retrieved 27 September 2016, from <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/work-family/paid-leave/state-paid-family-leave-laws.pdf>

4 Family And Medical Insurance Leave Act (FAMILY Act), H.R. 1439/S. 786, 114th Cong. (2015).; see also, National Partnership for Women & Families. (2016, April). *The Family And Medical Insurance Leave Act (The FAMILY Act)*. Retrieved 27 September 2016, from <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/work-family/paid-leave/state-paid-family-leave-laws.pdf>

5 Lake Research Partners. (2016, February 4). *Findings from National Survey Shows Strong Support for Paid Family and Medical Leave*. Retrieved on 27 September 2016, from <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/work-family/fmla/fmla-23-lrp-poll-memo.pdf> (National telephone survey conducted with 1,004 adults, including 808 likely 2016 voters, by landline and cell phones from January 28-31, 2016. The topline results reported here are consistent with public polling on paid leave conducted by the *New York Times/CBS News*, the *AP-GfK* poll, NORC/University of Chicago and other public sources.)

6 Benenson Strategy Group. (2015, March). *Report to the Center for American Progress, February 2015 Swing State Women's Economic Security Poll*. Report on file with the National Partnership for Women & Families. (Interview survey conducted with 3,000 likely 2016 general election voters from February 28 through March 8, 2015.)

7 Public Policy Polling. (2016, July 13). *Voters in 15 States Support a National Paid Family and Medical Leave Fund by Nearly Two-to-One Margin, Also Highly Supportive of Paid Sick Days and High Quality, Affordable Childcare*. Retrieved 27 September 2016, from <http://www.publicpolicypolling.com/main/2016/07/PPP%20Paid%20Leave%20Memo%20July%202016%20FINAL.pdf> (Automated telephone interview survey conducted with 9,611 voters in 15 states from July 7-10, 2016.)

8 Ibid. (Unpublished data on file with the National Partnership for Women & Families). Voters were asked whether they would be willing to contribute "five or more cents for every dollar you make, between three and five cents per dollar, between one and three cents per dollar, less than one cent per dollar" or nothing at all "to make sure you and all U.S. workers have access to paid family and medical leave for serious issues."