

June 15, 2010

The Honorable George Miller  
Chairman  
House Committee on Education and Labor  
2181 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Kline  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Education and Labor  
2101 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: **Work-Life Balance Award Act of 2010 (H.R. 4855)**

Dear Chairman Miller and Ranking Member Kline:

As part of a broad coalition of work-and-family advocates, we are writing to express our support for the Work-Life Balance Award Act, and we urge the Education and Labor Committee to pass this legislation as soon as possible.

The Work-Life Balance Award Act comes at a critical time for working families. Women now make up half of America's workforce, and their incomes are increasingly important to families' economic well-being: four of 10 mothers are the primary breadwinners in their households. At the same time, women continue to be primarily responsible for family caregiving. And more Americans, men and women alike, have eldercare responsibilities, a trend that will only continue as our country's population ages.

Especially among the youngest workers, both men and women are prioritizing their family responsibilities. Working fathers spend more time with their families than in previous generations—roughly three hours every workday with their young children. A majority of men and women now believe fathers should take *more* than two weeks off after the birth or adoption of a child. In fact, largely due to workplace cultures that do not recognize their needs, mothers see “work responsibilities” as the biggest obstacle to successful fathering, according to the National Fatherhood Initiative.

As a result of these historic changes in our nation's workforce, workplace policies that enable men and women to meet family and health needs without sacrificing their income or even their jobs are more important than ever. Already, many savvy employers have recognized this and have established a variety of innovative workplace policies that address worker needs. In particular, we want to recognize the efforts of companies that offer all of their employees—regardless of position and without penalty—access to paid leave and paid sick days, as well as flexibility and control over their work hours.

These model employers understand that work-and-family policies not only benefit workers and their families, they are also good for business. Such policies boost worker commitment, productivity, and morale; in turn employers can benefit from lower turnover and training costs—and higher profits. Research suggests that the turnover rate for employees who lack workplace flexibility, such as paid leave, is twice that of those who have it.

Work-and-family advocates have long called for a national dialogue about government policies to help workers successfully meet their obligations on the job and at home. The Work-Life Balance Awards proposed by this legislation would be a critical first step in this conversation by highlighting model employers that have already adopted family-friendly policies. Moreover, we believe that an award from the Secretary of Labor would also serve as a powerful incentive for additional companies to adopt strong work-family policies.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that the Work-Life Balance Awards Act swiftly passes in the House.

Sincerely,

National Partnership for Women & Families  
9to5, National Association of Working Women  
A Better Balance: The Work and Family Legal  
Center  
Business and Professional Women's Foundation  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
Coalition of Labor Union Women  
Labor Project for Working Families  
Legal Momentum  
National Association of Mothers' Centers and its  
MOTHERS Initiative  
OWL - The Voice of Midlife and Older Women