



When Women Succeed, America Succeeds **WORK & FAMILY BALANCE**

When Women Succeed, America Succeeds: An Economic Agenda for Women and Families promotes policies in the workplace that allow working parents to better balance the demands of work and family.

The Problems:

- Workers in 145 countries around the world have earned paid sick days – but there is no policy to ensure earned paid sick days in the United States. As a result, 39 percent of private sector workers in this country do not have a single paid sick day. Even worse, more than 70 percent of low-wage workers in the private sector go without any paid sick days. Paid sick days enable workers to stay home if they are ill or if they have an ill child at home.
- Workers without paid sick days have to either go to work sick or stay home and lose pay and risk job loss or workplace discipline. Nearly one-quarter of adults in the U.S. (23 percent) report that they have lost a job or have been threatened with job loss for taking time off due to illness or to care for a sick child or relative.
- Workers without paid sick days are more likely to report going to work with a contagious illness like the flu or a viral infection – and risk infecting others.
- The United States has no mandatory paid family leave policy -- making it one of just three countries in the world and the only country among industrialized countries to not mandate paid maternity leave for new mothers.
- Indeed, fully 88 percent of the U.S. workforce does not have paid family leave through their employers, and more than 60 percent of the workforce does not have paid personal medical leave through an employer-provided temporary disability program, which some new mothers use.
- As a result, when workers develop serious health conditions, have seriously ill family members or become parents, they are stuck between what is best for them and their families on the one hand, and the income and jobs they need on the other. That is why the need for paid family and medical leave programs for America's workers is so great.
- The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) – the nation's only federal law designed to help working people manage their responsibilities at work and home – requires employers with 50 or more employees to provide eligible employees with up to 12 weeks of job-protected, unpaid leave per year: to care for a newborn or newly-adopted child; to care for a seriously ill family member (spouse, child, parent); or to recover from a worker's serious illness. However, FMLA guarantees only unpaid leave, which millions of Americans cannot afford to take.
- Another key problem is that too many workers are currently not covered even by the FMLA protections, which are important in providing 12 weeks of job-protected leave. Nearly half of full-time employees are not covered by FMLA. Employers with fewer than 50 workers are exempt, and also many workers are not eligible because they are part-time or have not worked for their employer long enough. Also, FMLA coverage does not reflect the caregiving needs of many families today – with workers unable to take leave to care for grandparents, grandchildren, siblings, or in-laws.

The Solutions:

- Paid Sick Leave
- Paid Family and Medical Leave
- Expanded Family and Medical Leave
- Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave
- Schedules that Work